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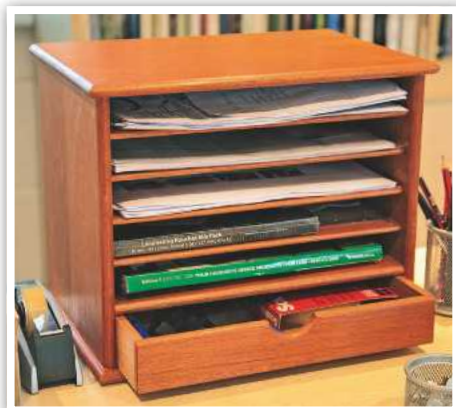


The Woodworker

May 2015

www.getwoodworking.com

& Woodturner



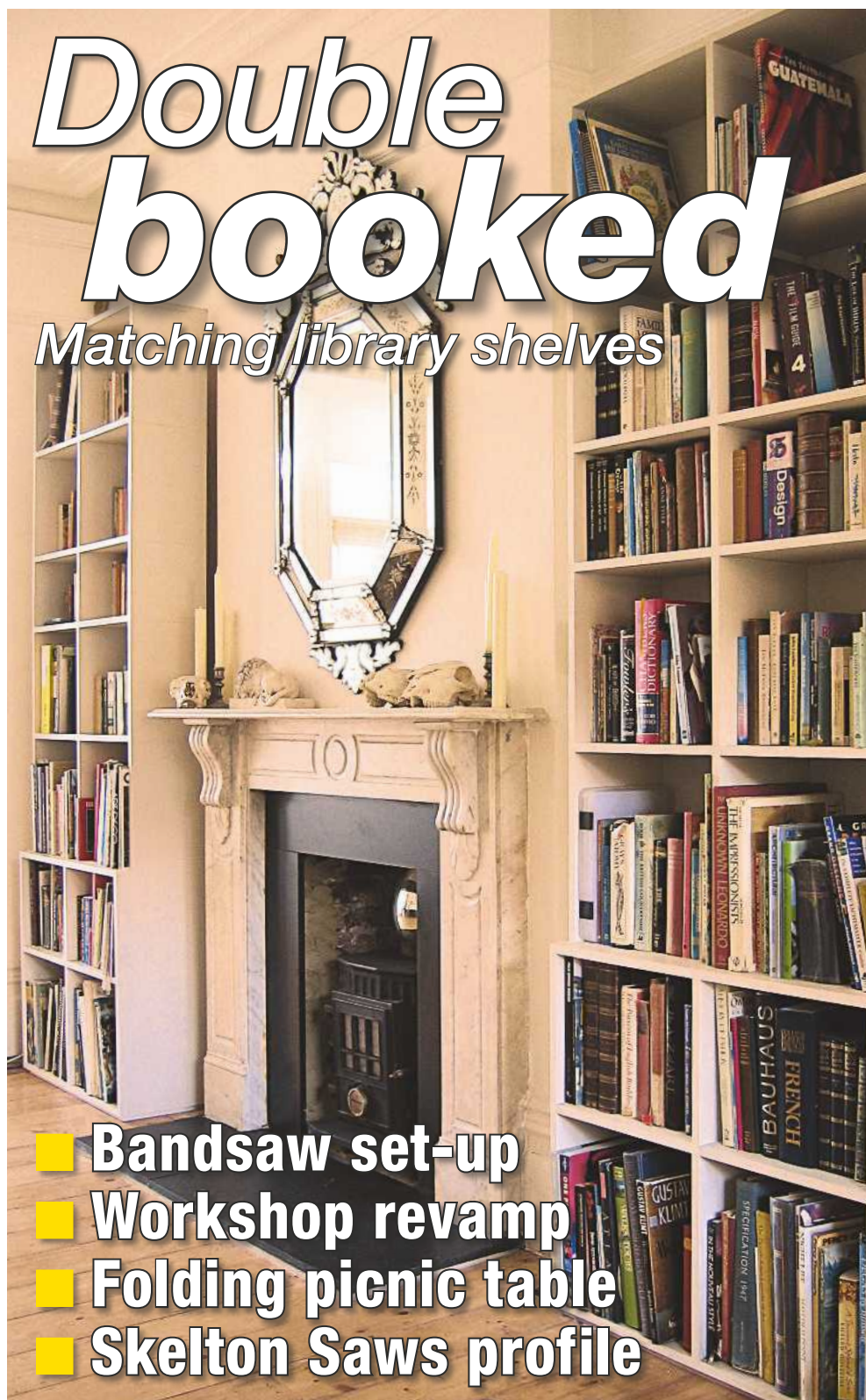
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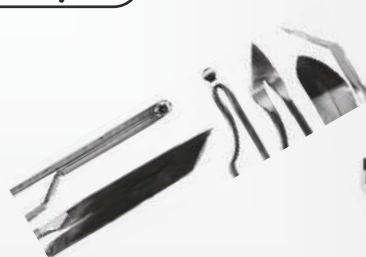
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Welcome



Don't believe a word I say! When it comes to being asked for our opinions, there can't be many of us who come over all shy and reticent. For the majority of woodworkers, when presented with this very invitation, you can almost hear the mental rolling-up of sleeves as they prepare a lengthy diatribe. And if it's on a topic which they actually know something about – instead of one on which only a vague understanding exists – well, no one's getting away early today, that's all I can say.

Patience counts

As the years have gone by, I've found I can readily work up a healthy opinion on most things, but those passing years have also instructed me on the wisdom of waiting for the right time, place and audience before letting rip (sadly not everyone has learnt this skill). Mind you, there are times when one can take it for granted that things can, and will, be said; I'm thinking of the average workshop environment here.

Thin veneer of politeness

The other day I was making my customary visit to the lads who share a large workshop next door to my veneer supplier. Whilst admiring much of what I saw (and holding back a bit here and there), when it came to what my good pal Tim was making I found that my opinion had preceded me and had left my lips before I was almost aware of it.

Now let me just say this: the job (a substantial bookcase faced in rosewood) had been specifically commissioned, and the client's wishes were fairly precise. We all know that a fair number of clients are

frequently out of touch with things like taste and understanding, so I didn't hold back with my 'useful' comments on colours and grain for interiors. All might still have been well had not another furniture maker joined in, and before we knew it Tim had left the building.

Wrack and ruin

At first bemused, I was soon wracked with guilt and apologised as soon as possible for my harsh critique (although I still stand by it!), immediately feeling better when it became clear that it was the intervention of the third party that had tipped the balance. Tim and I have a long history of 'commenting' on each other's work.

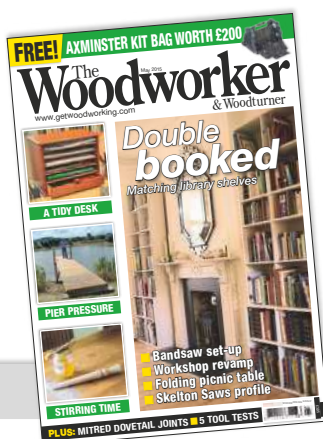
No easy answers

So what can be done for us opinionated types? Instead of freely discoursing at all times, I guess a modicum of restraint could be shown, at least until we understand each specific situation a little better and get a feel for how receptive the subject may be feeling today. If anything, it gives us a chance to exercise and develop a new skill, the skill of subtle criticism, or, as someone with thoughts more malign might see it, damning with faint praise.

At the end of the day though, it's only an opinion. The most important thing is to stick to one's own beliefs, to please oneself with one's own work, and to keep the customer satisfied! And if someone else claims not to like it, well, that's just their bad luck.

Mark

You can contact Mark on mark.cass@mytimemedia.com



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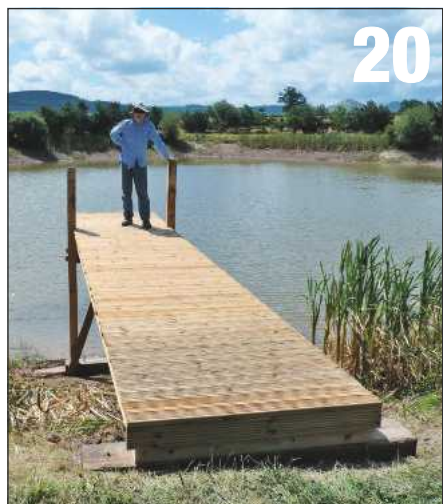
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& Woodturner

May 2015

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In brief...

ON THE FENCE

Ironmongery Direct, the UK's largest online and mail order supplier of ironmongery products, has introduced fence hardware to its range for the first time in preparation for the summer months.

Thirty-five new fence hardware products have been added to the existing range of over 14,000 products to cater for people who are looking to prepare their gardens for the warmer months ahead.

The new products include clips such as the Fence Panel Clip, brackets such as the Arris Rail Fence Bracket, and accessories for fence posts such as post spikes,



extenders and post tops.

The company decided to expand its range to cover fence hardware after conducting recent consumer research which showed a rise in customer demand for these types of products.

www.ironmongerydirect.co.uk



SPRING OFFERS

This spring BriMarc Tools & Machinery has come up with a host of offers. All appear in one of three leaflets. The first is the Jet leaflet, packed with offers on lathes, bandsaws, pillar drills and saw benches. Savings of between £100 and £800 can be made, and two of the lathes come with a free Evolution SK114 chuck.

The BriMarc Tools Spring leaflet focuses on good savings on Tormek, Flexcut, Sjöbergs and Veritas products. The Arbortech Contour Sander is also on offer at a special price with a free pack of heavy-duty discs.

The third leaflet is dedicated to Proxxon tools and is aimed at woodworkers, model makers and engineers. New products include the 230/E Micro drill and the PM100 polishing machine which comes with free felt cloth and microfibre polishing discs. To request a copy of these leaflets, please call 0333 240 6967 or visit

www.brimarc.com.

WELL DRILLED

Irwin Tools has added long and short bits to its current Blue Groove 6X range.

Until now, Blue Groove 6X bits, which are the world's fastest wood drilling bits, were only available in the 6in length. The company has now added 4in and 16in lengths. The 16in bit gives extended reach and the 4in bit is excellent for tight work between joists. Unlike spade bits that have spurs to scribe holes when cutting, Blue Groove 6X bits have a tapered three-flute design for faster chip ejection and less binding.

Prices range from from £7.69 to £57.17 depending on the specification. We'll be giving a selection of the bits away in our next issue.

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The engraver is supplied with two sets of letters from A to Z, a hyphen, a dash and a full stop – a total of 55 pieces. Three Allen keys, a hex (ball-head) screwdriver and a detailed instruction manual are also included. The price is £189.96.

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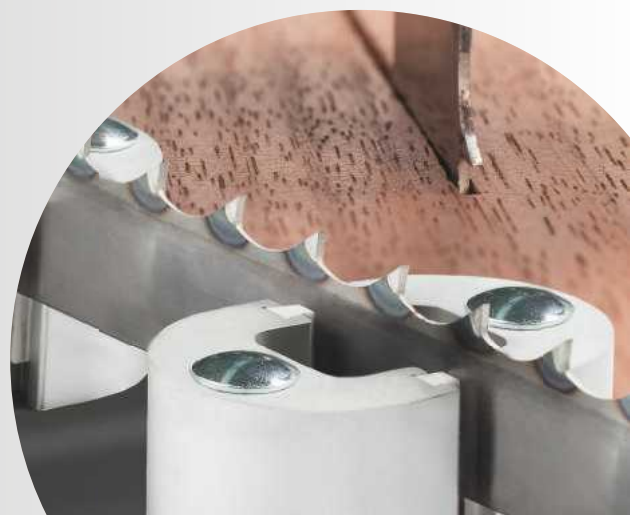
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In brief...

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The cutters will produce outward-opening flush windows. Similar tooling is also available to construct inward-opening windows in the Continental style. Using Wealden's suggested timber section sizes for the frame and sash will ensure that the cutters will produce the correct mouldings and the



pdf calculator will work out a detailed cutting list.

Wealden are keen to stress that these tools are intended for use only by competent woodworkers with a knowledge of window manufacture.

A video showing the basic making sequence can be found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nhU5H3ngwU>
www.wealdentool.com

TAKE A SEAT

Weird and Wonderful Wood is returning to Haughley Park near Stowmarket in Suffolk on May 16th and 17th. The now legendary fair attracts over 8000 visitors from far and wide. There are always new things to see, and at this year's event the site will play host to a replica 46ft Saxon ship, a shepherd's hut, a didgeridoo player from Bosnia and a wood carver from Nigeria.

Demonstrations include carving and sculpture, fine furniture and musical instrument making, displays by traditional fletchers and bowyers, chain saw carving, hurdle making, woodturning, labyrinth making, as well as traditional gypsy caravan displays. There will be a working mobile sawmill on site, so if you want to bring your own tree, it can be cut for you!

Weird and Wonderful Wood is



a unique event which is never the same from year to year.

There are new experiences every time, including many spontaneous happenings from street performers and acoustic musicians, but one aspect that never changes is the event's very special atmosphere that sees people return year after year as so many really enjoy it.

For opening times and tickets, call 01359 240724 or visit www.weirdandwonderfulwood.co.uk

MOBILE EXTRACTORS

Dustcontrol UK has developed a range of mobile dust extractors – the DC 1800, the DC 2900, the DC AirCube 500 and the DC AirCube 2000. The DC 1800 and the DC 2900 have been designed to work with hand-held power tools and small table saws. Lightweight and portable, they're powerful enough for source extraction and are also potent and effective vacuum cleaners, eliminating the need for sweeping. The AirCube models are used in conjunction with on-tool extraction to prevent dust migration.

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CAMVAC INDUSTRIAL EXTRACTORS & VACUUMS

MANUFACTURER: Record Power

D&M GUIDE PRICE: See website

D&M Tools are now stocking the range of CamVac industrial vacuum cleaners and dust extractors. In October 2014, CamVac were acquired by Record Power and production moved from Norfolk to Chesterfield. All current CamVac machines and accessories will remain in production using exactly the same tooling and manufacturing techniques that have historically made them so successful. The only change to take place is the introduction of Record Power's famous industry-leading five-year guarantee on all products manufactured from 22nd October 2014.

CamVac industrial extractors are suitable for a variety of applications. In addition to the collection of wood waste, they can tackle many other materials and have a diverse range of applications in industrial settings. All the machines are available with bespoke options, offering ultimate flexibility for each customer's needs, and are manufactured to order in the UK. Search CamVac on our website for more details.



MAKITA BLUETOOTH RADIO

MANUFACTURER: Makita

D&M GUIDE PRICE: £149.95

Makita have introduced a Bluetooth model to their popular range of site radios. Based on the DMR103 model, the new DMR106 is equipped with Bluetooth class 2 to connect your mobile device wirelessly for playing music with a range of up to 10m. A USB port enables charging of your mobile device, and an Aux-In jack allows you to connect other external audio sources. The large dual 89mm speakers provide high-quality sound. The DMR106 is compatible with all Makita Li-ion batteries including G-batteries, as well as running off the mains.



RECORD POWER WOODTURNING CHUCK PACKAGES

MANUFACTURER: Record Power

D&M GUIDE PRICE: SC3 £119.95, SC4 £149.95

The new SC3 and SC4 Professional geared scroll chucks from Record Power are direct replacements for their previous G3 and Supernova2 models, with some notable improvements. Integral to the performance of a chuck are its jaw slides. On both new chucks these have been made noticeably larger than others on the market, increasing their torque and load-bearing abilities.

The slides are made from high-tensile steel, impregnated with nickel-copper to ensure superior strength and longevity. They are controlled using a precision-engineered geared scroll which moves in the conventional screw direction – clockwise to close the jaws and anti-clockwise to open them. The Super Geared True-Lock technology used to manufacture the gears ensures excellent strength and unsurpassed surface and dimensional accuracy to give smooth vibration-free operation.

The SC3 chuck is available in three of the most popular thread sizes: 3/4in x 16tpi, 1in x 8tpi and M33 x 3.5. The SC4 Professional chuck is available as an insert version, with a full range of inserts to fit, meaning it can be used on virtually any kind of lathe. See the website for further details and options.



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BY MARK CASS

Slot machine



1 Making a slot template the hard way...

Customers, eh? Well, I couldn't do without them, but it's a shame I've not yet found a way to vet them more thoroughly before work commences. This recent job started out as a conventional pair of bookcases to fit into alcoves at each side of a chimney breast, but somehow quickly morphed into a set of contemporary open shelving units

As is so often the way, budgetary considerations were fairly high on the agenda with this project, and choice of material went the mdf way, conveniently determining the finished height at the same time. Keen to avoid the classic 'two sides and biscuited shelves' style of construction – never my favourite – and aware that the sides themselves would be visible in the generous alcoves, I feared that the finished units would resemble little more than ex-commercial storage shelving.

The easy way out

Despite an awareness of the effort involved, I plumped for a cross-halving joint design which would simplify assembly and avoid the need for a ton of extra cramps. It would also provide an interesting side detail into the bargain. Although this proved to be hard work, I'd definitely do the same again, as the finished results were in my opinion very pleasing. **Fig 1** overleaf shows the proposed front and side elevations, and the positions of the shelf centres.

Sawing marathon

After doing some careful calculations and preparing a cutting list, it was time to rip down a few full-size sheets of 18mm mdf to give the four sides and two centre components, plus all the shelves.

Whenever possible, I like to get all the cutting out of the way in one go. This an economical use of time and equipment, and gets the dusty job done in one hit.

Time for a jig

As much of the work would be cutting slots for the cross-halving joints, I set about making a jig which would enable me to reproduce an accurate slot with jigsaw and router, **photo 1**. It wasn't until later that I realised I'd not only missed the chance to make a superior template, but had also overlooked an easier way of making it.

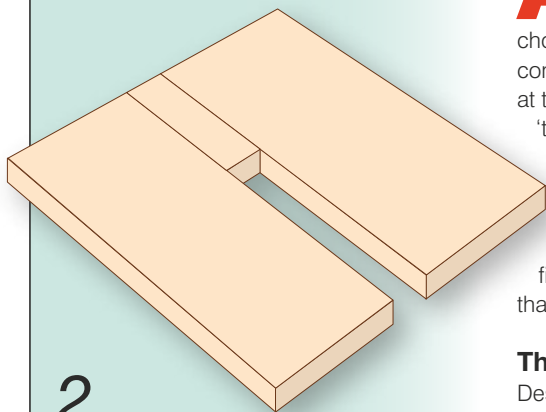
Instead of struggling with painstaking marking out, careful jigsawing and nailbiting routing of the 18mm gap I needed, I'd have been much better off just biscuit-jointing three pieces of board together, with the middle section 18mm wide – see **2**. This is a good example of how it really pays to stop and think at every stage of a job, looking for a better way of doing things.

Cutting back

Anyway, with the various jigs and cutting aids prepared, I needed to shape the upper profile of the bookcase sides, and here I went for the easiest option. With the required width set on the table saw, it was a straightforward job to dimension the parts concerned, and an earlier sample cut told me how close I could come to the base step-out as I neared the end of the line, **photo 3**. This just left a small corner to cut by hand, which was easily cleaned up with router and template cutter, **photo 4**.

Shelf positions

With all the sides and centre components prepared and checked for size – the sides were left deeper to accommodate a 9mm



2

...and here's how I should have done it!

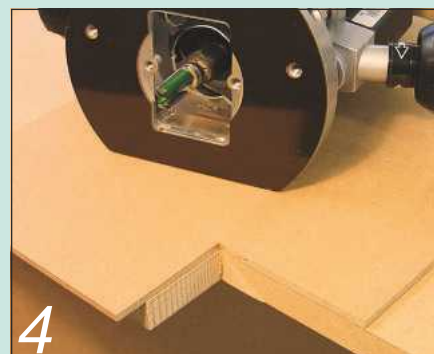
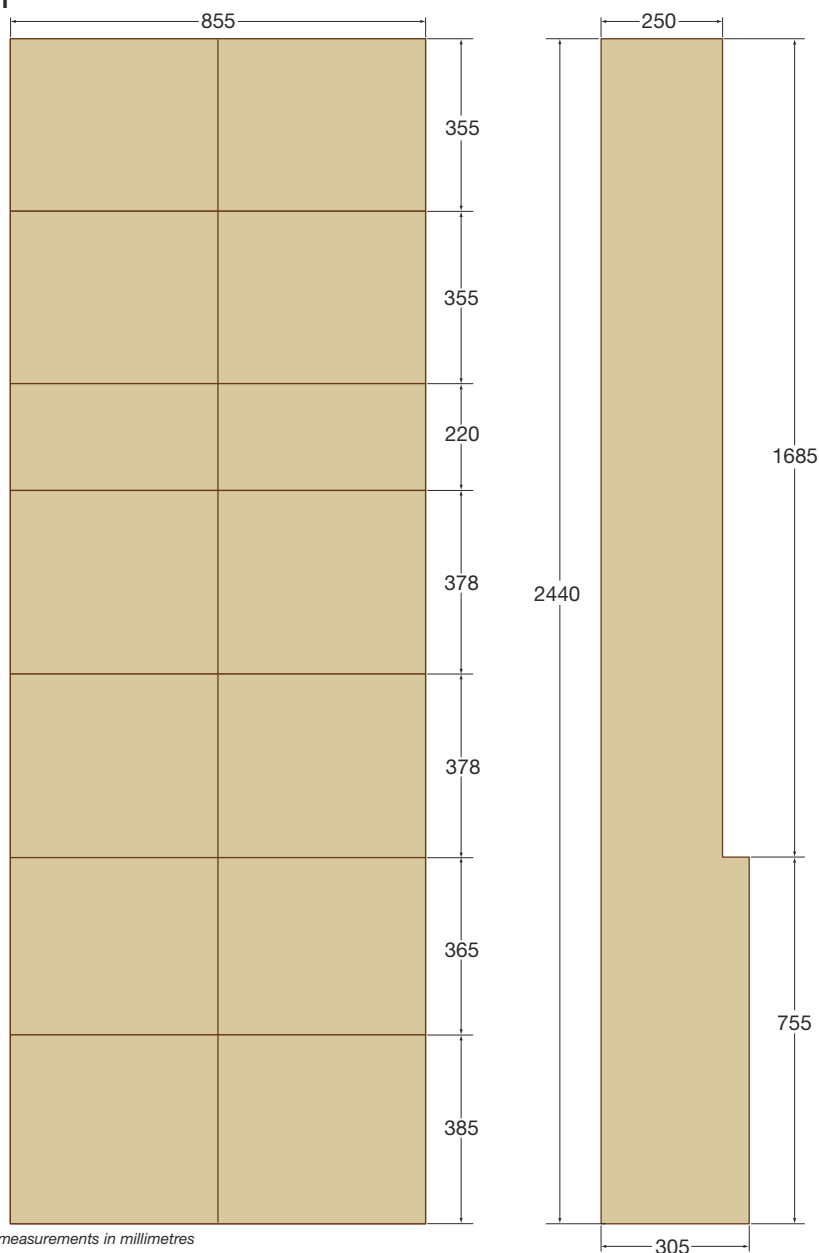


3

The sides were carefully profiled on the table saw. I've raised the guard to reveal the cut



Fig 1



The corner cut-out was cleaned up with the router and a template cutter



Accurate marking out for the shelf positions was particularly essential here



All the slots on one of the sides were rough-cut using a jigsaw...

EGGBOX BOOKCASE CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Sides	4	2440	305	18
Dividers	2	2440	296	18
Tops	2	855	250	18
Upper shelves	8	855	241	18
Lower shelves	4	855	296	18
Bases	2	855	305	18
Plinths	2	1500	50	18
Backs*	2	2404	837	9

NOTE that the quantities given are for two bookcases

* Measure back panels directly from assembled carcass

rebate for the backs – there then followed a period of intense concentration while the shelf positions were measured and marked, **photo 5**. Even with a drawing to work to, I've found over the years that this simple task is very easy to get wrong, and once the cuts are made there's no going back.

A cunning plan

My plan was to rough-cut the shelf slots for the cross-halving joints on one of the sides, **photo 6**, to clean them up with router, template cutter and jig, **photo 7**, and then to use this side component as a master for marking out the rest of the job, **photo 8**. This is pretty much what happened at first,



7 They were then accurately machined with my template and the router



8 The completed first side was then used as a master for all the other parts



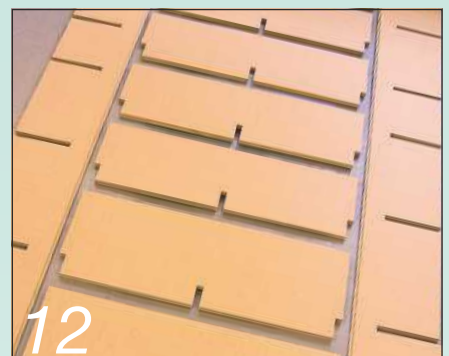
9 Trend's corner chisel cutter proved invaluable for squaring up the round corners



10 The cut-outs in the ends of the shelves were marked out *en masse*



11 All the sides and centre uprights were at last fully prepared for assembly



12 A final check revealed that everything was in order and assembly could get under way



13 As the carcass went together, I used a power planer to level up the worst edges...



14 ...and a small block plane to clean up the protruding shelf ends



15 The plinth strips are simply screwed into place to the underside of the carcass

and quite straightforward (if tedious) it was too. I did find however, that some accuracy was being lost in the process, and I felt happier in some respects to revert to the original jig for the router work.

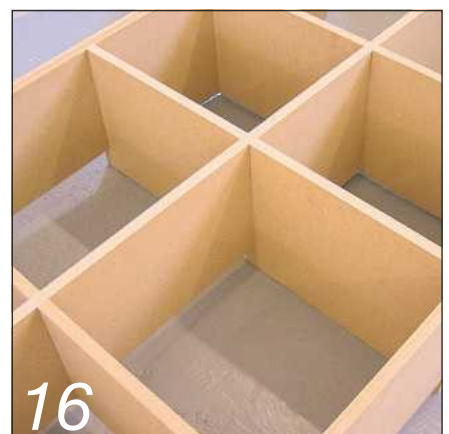
Square corners

After a mammoth session of marking, cutting and routing, the sides and centres were all nicely slotted, with just the corners to square up. I used one of those neat corner chisel cutters from Trend for the job, **photo 9**, but it did occur to me that the slots for the centre components could have been left rounded as they wouldn't show like those on the sides. This would, however,

have necessitated a slightly longer slot, and in my experience multiple dimensions lead to problems; it's usually far easier to make everything the same size.

Batch work slots

My batch work methods were given a good run-out when it came to the shelves; there were plenty of these, and with only two variants, marking out and machining was made much simpler than treating each one individually would have been. The various notches and slots were still treated with care and accuracy, **photo 10**, as an early trial had shown that the slot dimensions were critical to achieve a good result;



16 The back panel fits into the rebates in the sides

ASSEMBLY LINE

I debated whether to fit the centres to the shelves first or the shelves to the sides. In the end I went for the latter, but I'm still not certain if this was the best technique or not...

During my dry-run assembly it soon became clear that this was a 'one-shot' deal; things soon tightened up and I wasn't sure if I'd be able to get everything apart again without damaging something. After a bit of a struggle during which various mallets were employed, the carcasses eventually came together, helped out here and there by the extra pressure the odd sash cramp

could be trusted to supply.

With the sides and shelves accurately positioned, but the glue not yet gone off, I dropped the centres in – again, with some gentle persuasion. The job was now nearly complete, with just the top and bottom shelves to follow.

These were easy to fit as they could be screwed into place, neither being visible once the bookcases were standing in place. After a visual inspection and a check on square, I sneaked one or two brads from my nailgun into any joints that looked a bit vulnerable.



I decided to fit all the shelves to one of the side panels first...



... and then to offer up and fit the other side to them. The mallet came in very handy here



I squared up the carcass, cramped it securely and checked that it was all square



The next job was to remove the cramps and carefully ease the divider into position



The top and bottom were then glued and screwed into place to complete each carcass



A few 18g brads fired from my nail gun strengthened any vulnerable joints

anything too loose would create gaps and look sloppy, while too tight would make the job almost impossible to assemble.

The final rebate

With all the pieces – except for the backs – machined and ready, **photo 11**, it was time to clear the decks and prepare for gluing up. There was just one more step to be carried out first – cutting a 9mm square rebate on the rear edge of each side, ready to take the recessed back panel. Then it was time to lay everything out on the floor, ready for assembly, **photo 12**.

Tough planing

The next day it was time to clean everything up, and a spot of careful planing was called for to ensure that all the edges finished flush, and that the protruding shelf ends

were all uniform and tidy. Let's face it, mdf seems to blunt tools in seconds, but the bullet has to be bitten at times, so it was just a case of getting through it and keeping the sharpening stone close to hand. I did use a power planer once or twice for the worst bits, **photo 13**, but started to lose my nerve as the tolerances got finer and the chance of a slip came closer. I cleaned up the shelf ends by hand, **photo 14**.

Plinths and backs

The bookcase plinths were to be little more than set-back strips of 18mm thick mdf, and screwing these into place was pretty much the quickest and easiest task of the whole job, **photo 15**.

The carcasses were then measured up for their back panels, to confirm the theoretical sizes on the cutting list. Note

that the panels fit within the rebates in the two side panels, **photo 16**. These were then cut out on the table saw.

This is one of those jobs that is made much easier with a helping pair of hands – 8 x 4ft sheets of thin board have a tendency to act awkwardly going through the saw. However, if you're generally alone in the workshop, then take the time to set up a Workmate or similar to support the job as it comes off the saw blade; you won't regret it. I then bored holes in the backs to accept screws, but left them off at this stage for ease of painting later on site.

A fairly long slog through the sandpaper grades finally brought this project to a close. Then it was just a case of making a quick phone call to arrange for collection. This part of the job was an unexpected treat – a customer with his own van!

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BY KEITH SMITH

Pier pressure

We have quite a large pond in our garden, and a few years ago I made a small jetty so we could watch the wildlife in the water. My neighbour had often admired it, so it wasn't a big surprise when he asked me to make him one too

Our jetty was quite a modest affair, **photo 1**, in keeping with the size of the pond. Henry's plan was for something a little grander, and one evening he loaded us up in his Land Rover and took us to see the reservoir in the middle of a field on his farm. We'd never been there before, and were surprised just how big and deep it was, **photo 2**. However, he said it was comparatively empty at the time as they'd been pumping water out to irrigate the potato crop, so this was my opportunity to build him a jetty before it filled back up again.

The challenge ahead

The scale of the task was a bit daunting. We reckoned that to create a flat deck from the bank at the high-water mark would mean building a deck about seven metres long,

supported by a heavy oak frame about two metres high up to deck level and with two posts projecting above it. To make things really difficult we had just two days to do the job, and these ended up being the two hottest days of the year!

Logistical problems

I looked at my wife, and could see from her face that she thought this job was a non-starter. There was nowhere flat to assemble the deck or frame, moving materials out to the site meant a mile drive across fields full of potatoes, and with no shade whatsoever, it would be unbearably hot work. However, Henry was way ahead of us and had obviously worked out the logistics.

He told us we could make the deck frame in his barn and he would then carry it out to



1 Our own small jetty has an oak frame and joists below water level, with a treated softwood deck resting on top of it

2
It came as something of a surprise to discover the sheer size of our neighbour's 'pond'





3

Having such a large flat work space in the barn was a real blessing as we assembled the deck frame



4

Despite the heat the bank was quite muddy, which made moving the heavy oak beams into position something of a challenge



5 We eventually managed to manhandle the deck frame roughly into position on its supports... and then headed home exhausted by our exertions



6 Getting the deck level and secure on its support frame using an array of levers and blocks took us most of the second morning



7 We started fixing the decking boards to the frame, but by lunchtime we had to take a short siesta because of the intense heat!



8 A few hours later the job was finished, and it made a very impressive addition to the surroundings. All we needed now was some rain...

the reservoir with his Matbro Telehandler. This I had to see, so after providing him with a shopping list for the materials we needed we went back home and started to prepare ourselves to spend for a couple of gruelling days in the sun!

Making a start

When we arrived at his barn the next morning, he had already been to the timber merchant and there was a huge pile of wood waiting for us.

The deck frame was to be made up from 225 x 50mm treated softwood, but he couldn't get any timber which was long enough to stretch the length of the deck in one piece. This meant we had to have a join in each joist, which was far from ideal. We laid the wood out so the joints were staggered, and then lapped a 2.4m length of wood across each one and bolted the sections together using stainless steel coach bolts.

We then assembled the frame components using 6.7 x 150mm hex-head timber screws, which cost about £20 for 50 screws. I picked this relatively long screw as a lot of the fixings were going into endgrain and these screws have a high pull-out resistance, especially if they're driven in at a slight angle.

Braced for action

Constructing the frame was a relatively simple job which was made even easier by having so much space to work in. However, it was

difficult to work out how to brace the frame diagonally, and in the end I found that adding a couple of extra boards between the noggins was adequate, **photo 3**. Ultimately the decking boards would stiffen the whole deck, but I didn't want to add them at this stage as the frame was already heavy enough.

Supporting cast

Our next job was to make the heavy oak H-frame which would support the deck at the wet end. This would be under water for most of the year, with just a short period of partial exposure during the summer, and I didn't think that any mechanical fixings would survive for long due to the cycle of expansion and contraction the oak was likely to undergo. This meant cutting some enormous mortises and tenons by hand, and it was late afternoon by the time we had finished.

Heavy lifting

It wasn't practical to assemble the oak frame in the workshop, so we loaded the parts into the van and set off for the site. We quickly found that the parts which had been manageably heavy in the workshop became much more of a problem to manhandle on the rough and sloping ground, **photo 4**.

We finally got the frame assembled just as the deck arrived. It was such an amazing sight to see the deck being carried aloft by the Telehandler, high above the trees, that I forgot to take a photograph of it!

It turned out to be really difficult to get the deck into position and resting safely on the oak frame. The reservoir's sloping sides meant Henry couldn't get the Telehandler at the right angle, and ultimately we ended up having to manhandle the deck onto the frame, **photo 5**. It wasn't level and it wasn't straight, but at this point we'd had enough and called it a day.

Shipshape at last

The next day we made an early start and, armed with various levers and blocks, managed to get the deck level and secure, **photo 6**. We used old railway sleepers as foundations which we pinned into the ground with long steel spikes. We then fixed the oak frame to the sleepers with threaded stainless steel rod and bolts.

I had already cut the decking boards to length in the barn, so we set about screwing them to the frame, **photo 7**. However, the searing heat got to us before we could finish the job, and we had to go home for a short siesta!

We went back a couple of hours later and finished the job, **photo 8**. Only then could we appreciate the fabulous location in which we'd been working. On the way back we met the farmer's teenage son coming out to look at our handiwork. I said to him: "Don't be tempted to jump in off the end of the jetty. The water's too shallow." My warning fell on deaf ears!

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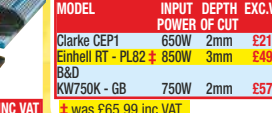
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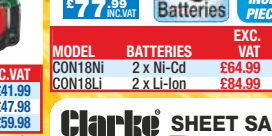
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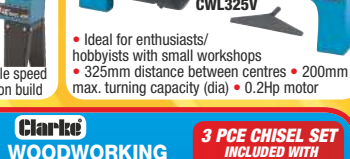
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POF1400ACE				

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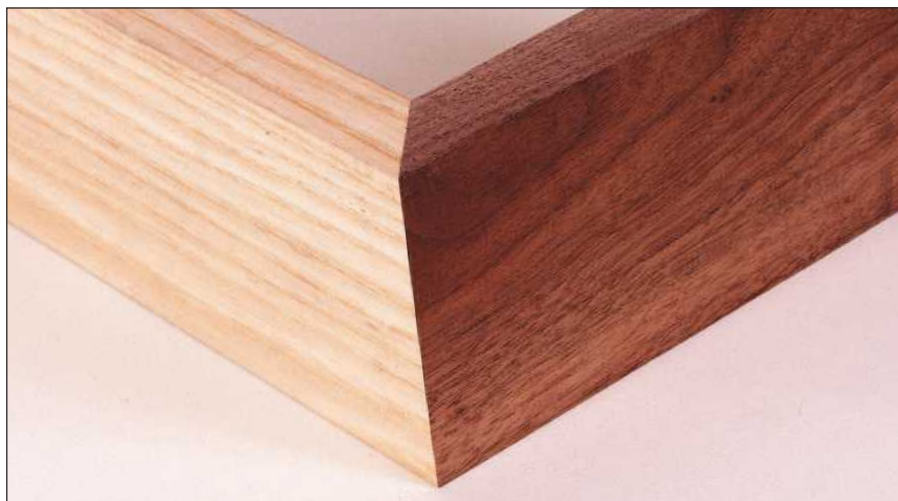
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BY ANDY STANDING



The invisible mitre

Dovetails are usually thought of as decorative joints, designed to be seen and admired as an example of the craftsman's art. The mitred dovetail rather goes against this, as once completed the dovetails are invisible

This feature explains the joint's other name: the secret mitred dovetail. The mitred butt joint is a notoriously weak joint as it relies on gluing endgrain to endgrain. Cutting dovetails inside the mitre obviously gives the assembly considerably more strength. However, this is a pretty time-consuming and difficult joint to make. Unusually the pins are cut first and are used to mark the position of

the tails. After all your efforts all you end up with is what appears to be a standard mitre joint.

Traditionally it would have been used by cabinet and box makers, though today it is more likely to be replaced with a biscuit joint which can be made in moments. Before you start, prepare your wood so both pieces are the same width and thickness, and cut to length



1 Take a marking (or ideally a cutting) gauge set to the thickness of the wood and mark a shoulder line on the inside of both pieces



2 Using a marking knife or scalpel and a mitre or combination square, mark the mitres on both sides of both pieces



3 Re-set the gauge to cut the lap. Mark it from the outside face first; it should be around 4mm wide, depending on the thickness of the wood



4 Now mark the inside face, running the gauge stock against the end of the workpiece Use the same gauge setting as in step 3



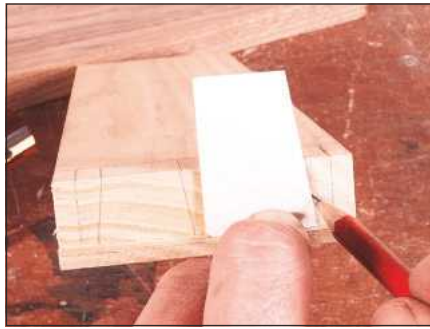
5 The marked-out component should look like this, showing the mitre and the lap



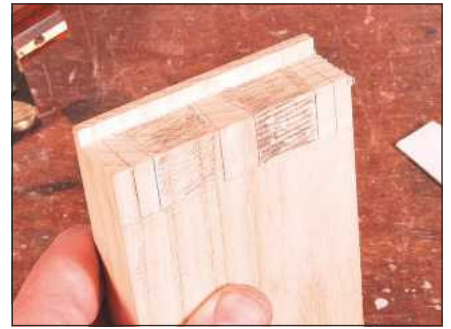
6 Carefully remove the square section of waste wood to create the lap using a fine-toothed tenon saw or a pullsaw



7 Mark out the main elements of the joint. Begin by gauging a line parallel to the edge from the shoulder line up to the lap. This should not be set in by more than about 6mm. Do this on both components



8 Mark and cut the pins first. Make a cardboard template that can be stood in the rebate to mark the slope of the joints – this is usually 1 in 8 for hardwoods and 1 in 6 for softwoods



9 It's worth marking the waste areas so you know what to remove, in case you lose sight of what you're doing once you pick up your saw



10 Saw down the waste side of the lines with a tenon or pullsaw. Angle it so that it cuts down to the shoulder line while also cutting up to the lap



11 Pare out the waste with a chisel, working from both the face and the end of the workpiece. Cut carefully within the lines



12 Cut the mitre with care, guiding the saw blade with the thumb of your free hand



13 Use a chisel to pare away the inner edge of the lap to match the cut mitre



14 Stand the pinboard on the tailboard and transfer the joint positions to the latter using a knife or sharp pencil



15 Again mark out the waste areas. Chalk is much easier to see than pencil on dark woods



16 Use the same technique as before to remove the waste. Stand the board upright in the vice and support the lap with scrap wood for security. Cut the mitres and shape the lap



17 Test the fit of the two completed components before applying glue. Inevitably adjustments will need to be made to ensure that the joint is as tight as possible



18 Apply a little glue when you're happy with the fit. The two parts should slide together to leave a perfectly fitting mitred corner joint. Cramp it until the glue has set



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cutting height 280mm
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Down here in the South of England, we tend to enjoy believing in Northern stereotypes. As well as the usual sort of silly stuff, truer tales of ongoing industrial decline have reluctantly been absorbed to the fullest depths of feeling. Now I'm a big fan and supporter of UK manufacturing, and I fully hope – and am starting to believe it may just be possible – that we can claw back most if not all of what we've lost over the last few decades.

It came as very pleasing news then to learn that a small company in North Yorkshire had recently started up and had just gone into production with the first of a range of high-end woodworking handsaws. Accepting an invitation to come and see for myself, I set off for Scarborough with my notepad and camera and an appointment with Skelton Saws.

Little acorns

All of the best companies have to start off small, and so it is with Skelton; just the two of them at present – Shane and his partner Jacqueline, working out of a brick garage adjoining their home near the coast. It wasn't till I met them both, learnt the history behind it all, saw the manufacturing centre and, most importantly, witnessed two people working in absolute harmony and with a common desire (but that should really be an uncommon desire, such was the intensity of their belief in and their



BY MARK CASS



Up country

You may have noticed a new advertisement in the magazine recently, offering English saws made in the English countryside. I was intrigued, and headed North to find out more

commitment to what they were achieving) to succeed that I realised this was no pipe dream but rather the beginning of a new brand that all of us woodworkers in the UK will be proud of one day.

Long journey

Shane Skelton has probably the perfect background for his particular calling; one which has managed to combine problem solving, engineering and woodwork in equal measure. Factor in a number of enforced



The Indian rosewood stock for the handles is all thickened by hand



Shane uses these jaws for metalworking and a granite slab for final dressing

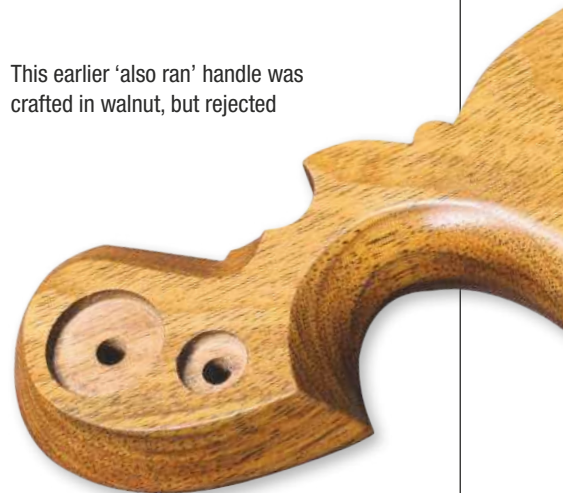


This image shows various stages in the development of the perfect handle



Compare the current model (below) with an earlier version featuring an olive ash handle

This earlier 'also ran' handle was crafted in walnut, but rejected



career adjustments (otherwise known as redundancies) to coarsen up his natural Yorkshire grit, 100-mile round trips to the only available employment, biking it to various night schools, and it's clear that his drive to succeed is a very strong one.

However, it's not really success which drives him. Like most inventors of his ilk, it's the satisfaction of producing the actual artefact or solving the problem that is the most important thing. And if that happens to be something adjudged by the market as significant or important – as is the case in a pending patent he has in the oil and gas industry – then 'success' is generally found not far behind.

Past and future

From blacksmith to gunsmith, via aeronautical and more earth-based engineering, Shane's career has taken in a large amount of making, repairing and inventing. Having spent three years restoring Georgian furniture at a large antique firm 50 miles away during which he repaired and remade all aspects of the pick of their stock, Shane happened to read the classic tool enthusiasts' favourite book: *The Tool Chest of Benjamin Seaton, 1797*.

This description of the most complete and best preserved tool kit of Georgian times (and it looked so good I've just ordered my own copy) inspired him to have a go at making his own saw, and to send off for a diy saw kit from the United States. Unsurprisingly disappointed with the quality of the resultant product, he set about designing his own, and doing all the preparatory investigative work to create the process that could achieve what he wanted on a commercial scale.



A business is born

An unassuming man with no airs and graces, Shane looked back on his varied career with a wry amusement, and played down any suggestion that he'd done anything different from anyone else. Clearly gifted with a top-class analytical and problem-solving mind – just the kind that powered the Industrial Revolution and led to the development of much of the world's technology today – and a pair of hands which are comfortable with tools of any kind, it was only a matter of time before something like Skelton Saws came about.

Word out

The new saw has been on sale only since last December, but it's not taken long for the word to get round the woodworking world of just how good a saw it is. Starting simply at the nearby Harrogate show, Shane and Jacqueline passed a sample saw around to various exhibitors, and things have progressed from there. In the week before my visit, Skelton had shipped saws to North America and New Zealand, and I suspect it won't be long before they have tools on every continent around the world.

We all know that marketing is a vital tool in the workings of any business today, and Shane probably couldn't have found a better person than Jacqueline to carry out this non-stop and ongoing task if he'd tried. The fact that she is also the mother of their children and is possessed of a creative energy to match his own makes for a



The classic fly press – a staple of engineering for years – sees a lot of manufacturing action



The workshop functions with minimum kit and maximum output

dynamic combination, and one which I found positively heart-warming.

First saw

The current model – reviewed on page 81 – is a classic dovetail saw, loosely based on a design by Kenyon Toolmakers from circa 1760, and features a heavy brass back as you would expect, but attractively shaped at both ends rather than just left plain. The blade is hand-worked and cut from best-quality Swedish 18 thou spring steel,



Hand tools of various types outnumber the powered variety by miles

and, for me, looking at the difference between the bought-in plate and the finished saw blade was awe-inspiring.

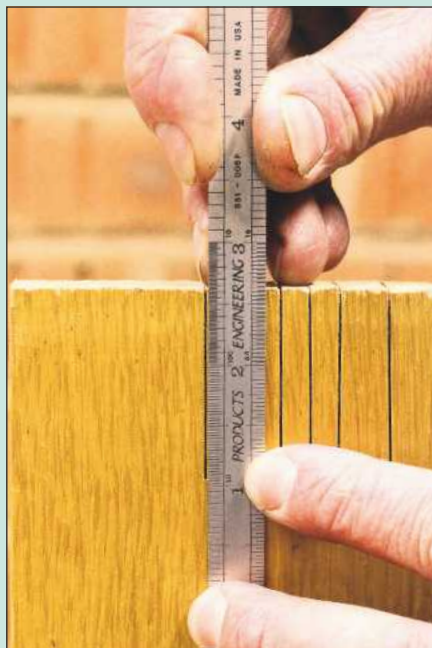
With his engineering and gunsmithing background, forming the blade and teeth is straightforward enough for Shane, but it's his recent experiences as head of R&D at an energy oriented engineering firm that must surely be thanked for the unparalleled accuracy of his saws. Having devised a number of fiendishly clever and exquisitely machined jigs (sorry no photos, people;



Shane has designed custom die-stamps for the brass back and handle screw



The back is shaped from solid brass strip, while the blade screws are custom-made



Test cuts are made to ensure that the kerf is both straight and narrow



The editor has a try-out, and was presented with a sample saw to test at home.



The workshop boasts a beautiful set of Ashley Iles chisels...



...and a tool roll packed with a huge variety of old and new carving gouges

some things are best kept under wraps!) the teeth are hand-cut with ease and a 100 per cent confidence in repeatable certainty.

Sourcing things

I asked Shane about the difficulty or otherwise of sourcing or commissioning parts and components for his business, and he told me that it was no bother at all. With all the paring down and rationalising of recent years, a clearer picture for

engineering manufacture has appeared before my Southern eyes, and it's great to see that much good work is being done to supply continuing advancement in all fields of technology.

While it may be unlikely that our traditional heavy industries will ever rise again, there is still plenty of production capacity out there and the more there is, the greater will be the demand for additional and supporting manufacture. It's thanks to small firms like

Skelton Saws that the UK's flame of creativity stays lit and continues to burn brighter with every passing year. I take my hat off to all concerned.

Comfortable grip

Let's get back to the saws themselves. The handles are all individually sawn on the bandsaw from plantation-grown sustainable Sonokeling rosewood, and are shaped and carved by hand using tools inherited from his grandfather and skills he learned during one of his periods of self-motivated study at the hands of a retired traditional carver.

Shane reckons he filled a whole wheelie bin with try-outs and practice pieces, and experimented with a variety of hardwoods before settling on the current species (*Dalbergia latifolia* for all of you Latin fans). The blade is secured into the handle with custom-made brass screw assemblies, the primary fixing featuring a die-stamped boss medallion which bears the company motif of a peacock with an acorn in its beak. The peacock is symbolic and represented immortality to the Ancient Greeks; Skelton don't expect their saws will last forever, but you never know...

Straight and narrow

Once made, each saw is tested for straightness of cut – something I don't think many other manufacturers concern themselves unduly with. As was explained to me, if the teeth on one side of the blade have a slightly fuller set or are in some way 'longer' than the others, they will do more cutting and the resultant kerf will inevitably start to lead in that direction. Shane says it generally needs only a stroke or two on a fine diamond stone to correct any discrepancies, leaving the finished saw in perfect condition to cut the finest dovetails you ever thought possible.

Update

Since my trip up North it sounds as though things are going very well. The next saw – a carcass saw (similar to the dovetail but larger) – is in production and the first ones are being shipped this week. Lie-Nielsen, US makers of high-end tools themselves, have just started recommending Shane Skelton as the 'go-to guy' for any saw doctoring on their own range.

All in all, one would have to say that things bode well for the Skeltons, and I shall enjoy reporting on new tool developments as they inevitably occur. And as for me, I'm off to try out the loan saw for myself (it's currently in my 'special tools' drawer). Read all about it on page 81.

No other classic circular sawbench comes close when compared to the Scheppach Precisa 6.0. This ultimate circular sawbench boasts a massive solid cast iron table: accuracy to within 1/10th mm; 110 mm depth of cut on solid timbers; up to 1100 mm cutting width and 1400 mm length of cutting stroke with appropriate optional attachments. An adjustable 8-15 mm grooving cutterhead and pre-scoring with integral motor unit is also available on request. Scheppach Precisa Series circular sawbenches are simply the best investment you can make in a classic circular sawbench if quality, precision and performance are included in your priority list. Why would you even consider compromising?

Precisa 6.0
c/w optional Sliding Table Carriage
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Professional Series



Optional 8-15mm adjustable grooving cutter. (PRO-DUO twin guard assa required for grooving, Part no. 5460 1100).



2 separate hand wheels for precise height & angle settings.



Micro fence setting scale to within 1/10th mm calibrations.



Optional pre-scoring unit with integral motor. Precisa 6.0 VR model only. Cannot be retro-fitted.



Upgrade to sliding table carriage with articulated arm. Add £295.00 if ordered with the machine.

What they say:

"I looked at a number of other machines & seriously considered a ** which was £1000.00 cheaper but which is made in China. After considering all the quality & performance issues I chose the Precisa 6.0 & can assure you it is one of the best decisions I have ever made. It is worth every extra penny - and I mean that!"

Mr AC. Wills.

** Well known respected British brand name quoted but withheld by NMA.



Precisa 4.0 - P-2
Professional Series



Precisa 3.0 - P-1
Workshop Series

Model	Product Group Series	Specification includes (as per quoted price)	HP 240v / 415v	Depth of cut & Length of stroke	Price Exc VAT Plus Carriage	Price Inc VAT Plus Carriage
Precisa 3.0 P-1	Workshop	Inc STC + TWE + TLE (see below for explanation)	3.5 / N/A	90 mm x 1400 mm	£1207.50	£1449.00
Precisa 4.0 P-1	Professional	Inc 1.4m STC + TLE (ditto)	3.5 / 5.2	87 mm x 800 mm	£1775.00	£2130.00
Precisa 4.0 P-2	Professional	Inc 1.4m STC + TWE + TLE (ditto)	3.5 / 5.2	87 mm x 800 mm	£1980.00	£2376.00
Precisa 6.0 P-1	Professional	Inc 2m STC + TLE (ditto)	4.0 / 6.5	110 mm x 1400 mm	£2416.67	£2900.00
Precisa 6.0 P-2	Professional	Inc 2m STC + TWE + TLE (ditto)	4.0 / 6.5	110 mm x 1400 mm	£2590.00	£3108.00
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STC = Sliding Table Carriage; TWE = Table Width Extension; TLE = Table Length Extension.

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BY ALAN HOLTHAM

Order, order!

With my desk overflowing with excess but necessary clutter, I reckoned the time had come to bring some order to the chaos. I decided to replace the tottering tower of wobbly stationery trays with a smart little desk tidy that had some closely spaced shelves for papers and a small drawer to hide away all the other odds and ends

Such a simple project could be modified for all sorts of other applications, like storing recipe cards in the kitchen, knitting patterns in the living room or even abrasive paper in the workshop. It's a good example of less being more on the design front.

The raw materials

I wanted something that would look a bit stylish, so I settled on using some second-hand Brazilian mahogany for the whole construction. In a former life this material had been a shelving unit in a local shop. Although it was peppered with screw holes, biscuit slots and bad scratches, it was ideal for a project like this that needed only



1 Cut the thinner sections down to size on the bandsaw



2 Use the thicknesser to plane both sides of these thin sections



3 Cramp the widened sections together and set them aside to dry



4 Rip the widened boards down to the required widths



5 Align the biscuit slots using the fence on the jointer as a guide



6 Use the fence again to provide the correct offset and keep the slots vertical



7 Assemble the main carcass dry to test the fit, and do any necessary trimming



8 The intermediate shelf is fitted in place with two biscuits at each side



9 Cramp the two sides together side by side and machine the first slot for the shelves

relatively short lengths of thin stock.

Its existing thickness of about 25mm meant that although I could resaw the very thin material for the shelves, the thicker material for the carcass would require some rather wasteful planing down, but at least it was free!

Cutting down

If you need to cut thicker material down into thinner sections, the bandsaw is the ideal tool, **photo 1**. Use a sharp blade and allow it to cut at its own speed rather than forcing it. With old and dry timber like this, there is

rarely any serious distortion during the re-sawing process, and you should end up with truly flat material.

It's just not safe to surface very thin material such as this. Instead you'll have to rely on the thicknesser to plane both sides, but it will press flat anyway under the feed rollers. Take only light cuts from each side, and leave it a couple of millimetres over the finished thickness at this stage, **photo 2**.

Glue up

Unfortunately, the original shelves were not quite wide enough for my finished project, so I had to glue up a wider piece. The most effective method here is to glue it all up into one big piece and then slice off the widths required, rather than trying to make up each piece individually.

When the timber is this thin, I don't bother with biscuits as any slight misalignment can be corrected when the shelves are finally

DESK TIDY CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Top/base	2	360	245	12
Sides	2	270	235	12
Bottom shelf	1	320	228	10
Centre shelves	4	325	220	5
Back panel	1	330	280	3
Drawer front/back	2	318	50	8
Drawer sides	2	210	50	8
Drawer base	1	310	225	3



10 Lock the two halves together with a wood strip while making subsequent cuts



11 You could make a repeat jig, or just reset the position of the cramp guide as required



12 Thicken the shelf material down so each one is a smooth sliding fit in its grooves



13 Round over the shelf edges using a tall temporary sub-fence as a support



14 The resulting fit in the routed grooves was very neat and visually pleasing



15 Note that the rebates in the carcass top and bottom are stopped



16 Round over the carcass edges on the router table; make the end-grain cuts first



17 Apply brushing lacquer to all the internal surfaces before doing any assembly work



18 Assemble the main carcass and check that everything is square as you tighten the cramps

thickened. There is also then no danger of cutting through a joint and exposing the biscuits when making any of the later shaping cuts.

Use the same procedure for the thicker material for the carcass, cramping it all up thoroughly and then leaving it to dry at least overnight, **photo 3**.

Ripping away

The completed boards can then be removed from the cramps and the worst of the hardened glue squeeze-out removed with a chisel to allow it to sit flat on the saw table. Rip these down to the required widths, leaving them a little oversize and being careful to orientate the cuts so that there will be no joints near the edge of a piece, **photo 4**.

Although the widths are cut slightly oversize to allow for planing, I cut the lengths to the exact size so that any

breakout on the crosscut is removed with the subsequent thickening cuts. Once again, only take light cuts until you reach the required thickness.

Joining up

The main carcass is then biscuitied together – a relatively straightforward procedure for the uprights, as the slots can be aligned using the fence on the biscuit jointer, **photo 5**. Things are little more complicated for the horizontal members as the uprights are set in slightly. However, if you hold the work in the vice against a piece of wide scrap material, you can still use the fence to provide the correct amount of offset and at the same time keep the slots vertical, **photo 6**.

That's all there is to the main carcass. No fancy joints are needed on this one, but you do get a good-looking result with minimum expertise, **photo 7**. The intermediate shelf

also needs to be fitted in the same way, using a couple of biscuits at each side, **photo 8**.

Routing along

The next stage is a little trickier in that you have to produce parallel and matched slots in the two sides to take the thin shelves. I have always found the only way to get a perfect match in this situation is to cramp the two sides together and machine the slot in one go, using the router with a 6mm cutter and guiding the base against a straightedge, **photo 9**. Remember that the slot needs to be stopped at either end, as the four shelves are set back slightly from the front of the unit.

Once you have made the first slot, machine a small strip of wood to be a tight fit in it. This has the effect of locking the two halves together while you make the subsequent cuts, **photo 10**. If you have a



19 Then slide the four centre shelves into place in their grooves from the back of the unit



20 Prepare the four sides of the drawer box and cut the grooves for the drawer base



21 The corner joints are half laps, which are easy to cut on the router table



22 Shape the radiused finger pull using a small drum sander and assemble the drawer



23 Glue the back panel into place in the rebates. There's no need to pin it

lot of these evenly spaced slots to cut, it's worth making up a repeat jig, but for just a few like this, some careful measuring each time you reset the clamp guide is a quicker option, **photo 11**.

Rounding over

Now thickness down the shelf material until it is a smooth sliding fit in the groove, **photo 12**. Resist the temptation to make it too tight, or you'll have trouble assembling it all later on and you'll end up damaging something if you have to start hammering it into place. Obviously the ends of the slots are radiused, but the shelf edges are square, so to make them a neat fit the shelf edges have to be rounded over.

For this I used a horizontal router table and a tall temporary sub-fence to provide the necessary support, **photo 13**. You could use a roundover cutter and make a pass along either side of the shelf. I found a beading cutter of the correct dimension that allowed me to run it in a single pass. The resulting fit was very neat and extremely pleasing, **photo 14**. I must try this technique again sometime, instead of fiddling about cutting haunches so that the shelves overlap the rounded housings!

Rebating in

The back edges of the carcass now need to be rebated to take the back panel, which is just a piece of 4mm mahogany-faced plywood. The rebates are again cut on the

horizontal router table using a straight bit. Don't forget that the top and bottom rebates need to be stopped, or they will show in the finished cabinet, **photo 15**.

Finally, the front edges of the carcass need to be radiused like the shelves. This is a simple job with a roundover cutter in the router table. It's good practice to make the end grain cuts first before you do the long ones, to minimize any breakout on the corners, **photo 16**.

Finishing off

Once the unit is assembled, it will be very difficult to do any polishing work on the shelves, so now is the time to finish those areas that will become inaccessible after assembly. I use brushing lacquer for projects like this, **photo 17**, as it dries very quickly and gives a lovely satin finish that highlights the grain but is not too glossy. This will also dry to a hard finish in an hour so, even after several coats, so you can quickly move on to the assembly of the main carcass, gluing and cramping it firmly and checking for square as you increase the cramping pressure, **photo 18**.

I decided to assemble the basic carcass first and then fit the shelves afterwards, **photo 19**, rather than trying to get it all together in one go – a sure-fire recipe for disaster!

Boxing up

Prepare the material for the drawer from some of the offcuts, machining in the



24

Finish the lacquering, but leave the drawer sides bare so they don't bind in the cabinet

grooves to take the base, which is another piece of mahogany-faced plywood, **photo 20**. The corner joints are half laps – another simple job to cut on the router table, **photo 21**. The drawer front has a small radiused cut-out to act as the finger pull. Shape this to a perfect curve using a drum sander in the drill press, **photo 22**, then clamp up the drawer box and set it aside to dry.

The back panel just glues in place after you have squared out the corners of the stopped rebates in the horizontal members, **photo 23**. There's no need to pin it.

Once everything is assembled, you can lightly sand the unfinished areas and then brush on the lacquer as before. Leave the outside of the drawer sides unfinished or they will tend to bind when you close the drawer, **photo 24**.

Checking out

This really was a simple little project to make, with nothing difficult or challenging in the making process and requiring just some basic tools. Even working in quite a leisurely way, it offered a very pleasant day off from my normal paid jobs, and my reward was a tidy desk at last. Now where's that stapler?



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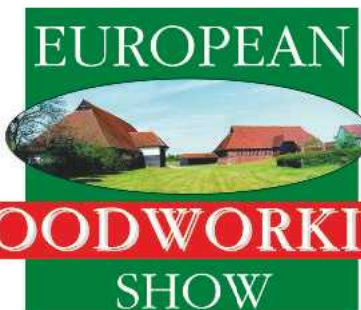
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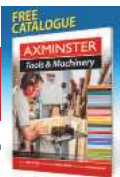
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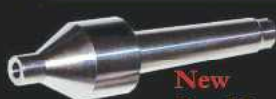
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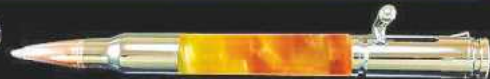
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BY GORDON WARR

Tea for two

This little folding picnic table has a variety of uses. It's suitable for the garden, the countryside or the beach, and would make a good indoor play table for children too

One of this table's advantages is that it will fold down to a very compact size; another is that the choice of wood for its construction is almost limitless. All the parts used in its construction have the same width and thickness; nothing very wide is required so, like the table shown here, it can probably be made from offcuts. It's also a good introduction to the use of rivets at the points where a pivoting action is required. All the other parts are simply screwed together.



1 Cut angled ends on the top bearers. The saw guard has been removed here for clarity



2 Boring holes accurately in the slats on the drill press was aided by a simple jig



3 Bore a shallow hole for the washer at each rivet position, then drill the rivet hole



4 Form the sloping notches on the bearers using the bandsaw, and chisel out the waste



5 I formed tiny chamfers on the edges and ends of all the slats to avoid splinters



6 Screw the slats to the bearers. Note the spacer, and the cranked batten to aid alignment

Preparing the parts

I started by preparing all the components to the cross-sectional size required. I used joinery-grade hardwood, but almost any timber is suitable – even good-quality redwood. Next, I cut the slats for the top to length, along with the two bearers which support them. The bearers had their ends sawn at an angle, as can be seen in **photo 1**. Note that I've removed the saw guard here to show the cut, which would of course normally be made with the guard in position for safety.

A simple drilling jig

Each slat requires two screw holes, and to drill them accurately I made the simplest of jigs to secure to the table of my bench drill, **photo 2**. This was no more than a couple of scraps of wood pinned to a piece of mdf. One of the pieces controls the distance of the holes from the ends, while the other ensures that they're centred on the slats. Jigs like this not only speed up a process; they promote accuracy as well.

The bearers needed some further preparation, requiring holes for the rivets at one end and angled notches in which the top rail on one set of legs would engage. When rivets are used in wood, it's essential that washers are introduced under the head of the rivets. In addition, when the rivet is intended to act as a pivot and allow swivelling movement, then a washer must also be positioned between the two components being secured.

Using rivets

The rivets needed for this table are easy to make from mild steel rod, available from B&Q or Screwfix. Here rod with a diameter of 6mm is required, along with a supply of washers of the same size.

When preparing to fit the rivets, prepare the shallow holes for the washers first, preferably using a saw tooth bit, and then bore the holes for the rivets, **photo 3**. These holes need to provide the minimum of clearance to allow for easy pivoting.

Mark the angled notches using a sliding bevel and cut them on the bandsaw, **photo 4**. When the waste has been removed with a chisel, the notch should provide a comfortable fit which is not too tight for the cross rail. The latter does not have corresponding notches on it.

PICNIC TABLE CUTTING LIST

All dimensions are in millimetres

Part	Qty	L	W	T
Top bearer	2	550	40	12
Diagonal brace	1	570	40	12
Slat	11	550	40	12
Leg	4	670	40	12
Upper cross rail	1	480	40	12
Leg brace A	1	520	40	12
Leg brace B	1	560	40	12
Lower cross rail	2	510	40	12

Lengths include an allowance for final trimming.

You will also need about 150mm of 6mm diameter steel rod, a supply of washers and two small barrel bolts.

Making up the top

Before any assembly takes place, I like to form tiny chamfers to all the slat edges. This is known as removing the arris, and was done by running the edges over my planer, while the ends were chamfered on a disc sander, **photo 5**.

Now the slats can be added to the bearers, **photo 6**, spaced out to give equal gaps. It helps if the outer two are secured first. Then a temporary batten can be cramped to these slats which will ensure that the ends of all the slats are aligned with one another.

The diagonal brace to the underside of the top needs to have its ends trimmed so as to fit between the bearers, **photo 7**. Note that one end is set in further from the outer top slat than the other. This is to allow for better access to the rivets at that end when the leg frame is added later on. This brace is screwed in place from the underside of the top.

Making the leg frames

The leg frames are similar but not identical, with their widths being important. Although the sizes for these frames have been given in the cutting list, they must be checked in relation to the top. The positions of the holes for the rivets must be carefully marked, and as before, the shallow holes for the washers made before the smaller holes for the rivets are bored. Finally, the top ends of all four legs are rounded over – another job for the disc sander, with a little hand sanding to follow, **photo 8**.

A riveting time

The steel rod needs to be cut into lengths, allowing for the thickness of the washers plus about 3mm for the doming over and a little slack. One end of the rod must first be domed over, and this is most conveniently achieved using ball-pein hammer while it's held in an engineer's vice, **photo 9**. Indeed, this is the prime purpose of the ball part of the hammer, with the blows aimed at the edges of the steel.

However, there are alternatives to the above. If an engineer's vice is not available, then an alternative is to bore 6mm diameter holes in scrap wood around 25mm thick, and to use a Warrington pattern hammer to deliver the blows at ever-varying angles to the end of the steel.



7 Screw the diagonal brace to the underside of the top after drilling the clearance holes



8 Round over the top ends of the legs on the disc sander, and finish the job by hand

9 Hold each rivet in a metal vice and dome the end with a ball-pein hammer



10 Assemble the first leg frame with the legs cramped to the top bearers to aid spacing



11 Drill holes for the fixing screws in the cross rail of the leg frame



12 Assemble the pivot and dome the other end of the rivet. Note the metal support underneath



13 Check the fit of the upper cross rail in the notches in the top bearer



14 I gave the top surface of the table a final smoothing with my belt sander



15 Add the two small bolts to the top bearers as shown to ensure the table is stable



16 The table folds down to a very compact size, ideal for transport and storage

The first leg

The leg frame which is riveted to the bearers is assembled first, **photos 10 and 11**, followed by the riveting. As before the already domed end of the steel must be well supported by a piece of metal (a small anvil or something similar) while the second end of the two rivets are domed, **photo 12**. The whole operation of forming these rivets is easier than might seem, and it's a useful skill to acquire.

The second leg

When assembling the second leg frame, the width must be checked again to ensure it provides the correct clearance with the first frame; then this too is riveted in position. The thickness of washers can vary, so you might need to use two washers as spacers in order to gain the correct alignment.

The sloping notches in the bearers to the top might need slight trimming in order to gain easy assembly of the leg frame with the top, **photo 13**. With assembly complete, I gave a light smoothing to the top using a belt sander, **photo 14**.

Weather protection

Even though this table is not intended to remain out of doors, I decided that I would give mine a couple of coats of preservative as a precaution.

Now just one job remained – to add two small bolts to the inside of the upper bearers alongside the sloping notches so they would engage with the upper cross rail on the leg assembly, **photo 15**. These are tucked away out of sight, and ensure the table will not fold flat unexpectedly! When it is folded up, however, it's very neat and compact, **photo 16**.

And so my table was completed, and at minimal cost. I'm happy to say it has been put to a variety of uses, and has proved to be a very worthwhile little project.





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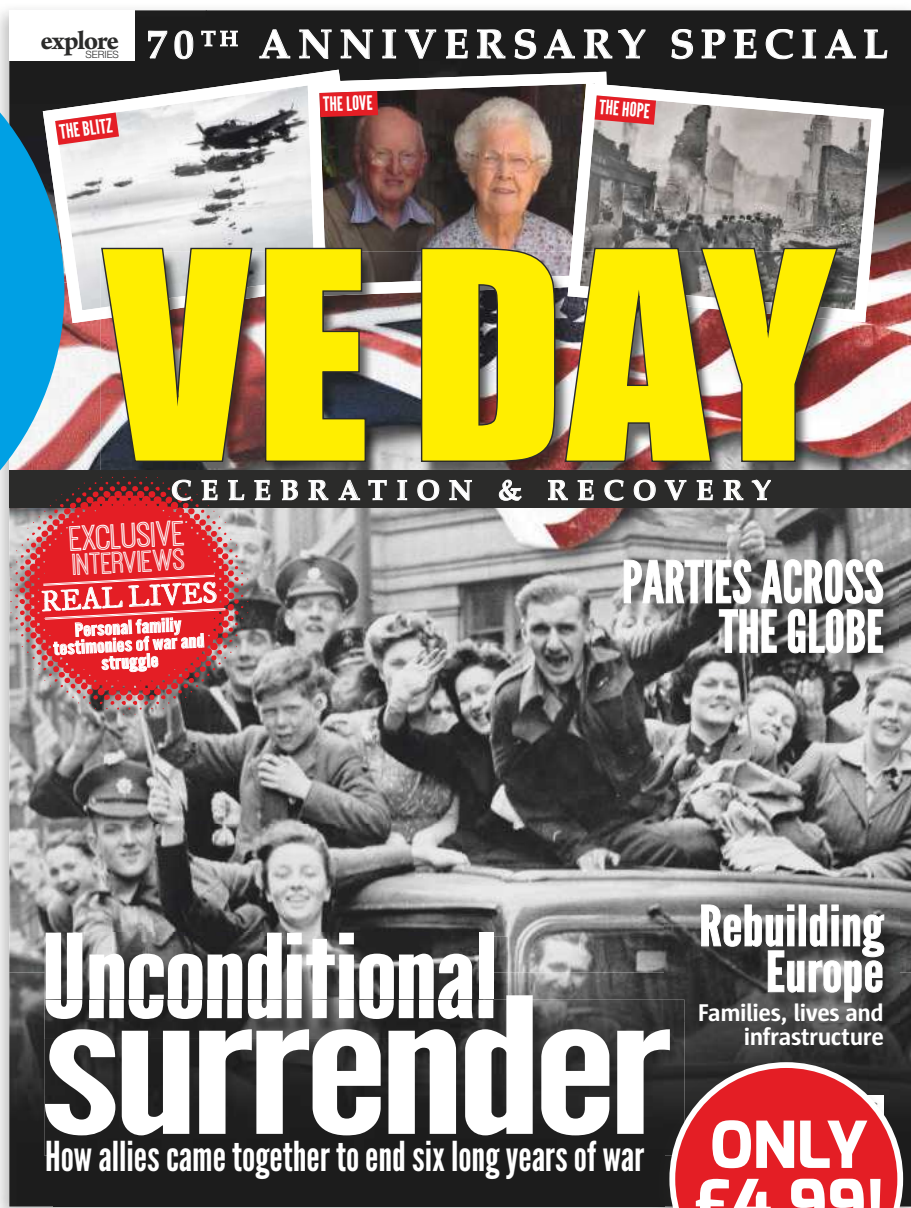
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Bandsaw set-up

This new series will take an in-depth look at setting up and fine-tuning a range of standard woodworking machines and larger power tools. We'll start with one of the most useful machines you can buy: the bandsaw. Next month we'll take on the table saw

Today, with the advent of good-quality reasonably-priced machines, there's absolutely no reason why the home woodworker shouldn't enjoy a little powered help. Choosing which machine to buy is another question. The first 'upgrade' from the handsaw is usually the circular saw or jig saw. Moving on, the debate gets a little more serious: table saw or bandsaw? This first choice is usually one of requirement. More often than not, however, the space problem will dictate. A table saw needs more space than a bandsaw. Once you own a bandsaw you'll wonder how you ever got on without it. Its one big advantage, short of applying the blade tension, is that it's always ready to use.

Little or large?

Bandsaws come in a range of sizes, from the small bench-top models to the monster 'band-resaws' found at timber merchants. There's bound to be a bandsaw to meet your needs. The small bench-top models may look like toys, but it's surprising how useful they can be. The small bandsaw shown opposite is great for small-scale work such as making templates and jigs.

If you have the room, a 300 or 350mm machine will open up the possibilities enormously. They are versatile and easily maintained, and what's more they won't break the bank. The larger machine featured on the right cost less than £600.

Bandsaw basics

It's important to use dust extraction on a bandsaw. Apart from the health and safety issues, the gradual build-up of dust will get transferred to the tyres on the wheels and will cause the blade to slip or, worse, to derail.

The bandsaw's table must be kept clean and smooth. This is particularly important when using a machine fitted with a cast-iron table. A regular application of a paste wax will keep it smooth and protect it from the ravages of rust. After cutting green timber on a cast-iron table, ensure that you clean it immediately. The moisture in the wood can cause the table to oxidise and show rust marks very quickly.



BANDSAW SAFETY

The bandsaw is an innocent-looking machine with the potential to cause a lot of damage very quickly. It's not as noisy as some machines, and this can provoke a false sense of security. As long as the blade is running, concentrate on it 100 per cent: nothing else matters! Make sure you use a push stick to feed stock past the blade, and always wear eye protection. Always turn the saw off as soon as you have finished cutting; never walk away from a bandsaw and leave it running. That unattended blade will slice through anything that touches it!

Make a point of keeping the table clear of stuff. The flat surface of a floor-standing bandsaw is perfectly positioned to put things down on; resist the temptation. Strangely, the worst thing to put on a cast-iron table is a hot drink; the resultant ring will be there for good.

Initial set-up

There are many schools of thought as to how to set up a bandsaw. The method shown here is the result of many years of trial and error in the workshop. The bandsaw needs to be in good condition, the top and bottom wheels in line, and the tyres in good condition. The blade should run centrally on the tyres.

Keep up the tension

On most bandsaws, using the maker's recommended settings will result in the blade being incorrectly tensioned. In light work this will cause many problems. Try to re-saw with an under-tensioned blade and you'll be in all sorts of trouble. The under-tensioned blade will cause the cut to be cupped; it will wander, and may even burn the face due to the increased friction.

There are blade tensioning gauges available, but these are a bit of a luxury for the occasional home use. This method of



Keep the table clean, and protect it from rust by maintaining it regularly



1

A 14-inch floor standing bandsaw like this won't break the bank, and will do a good job if you have the space for it



2

Small bench-top bandsaws may look like toys but they can be very productive if workshop space is limited



4

Good dust extraction used regularly will keep the machine free from dust build-up



5

The tensioning guide is at best only a rough guide and should be ignored!



6

With the machine turned off and the blade guard up, the blade tension can be assessed



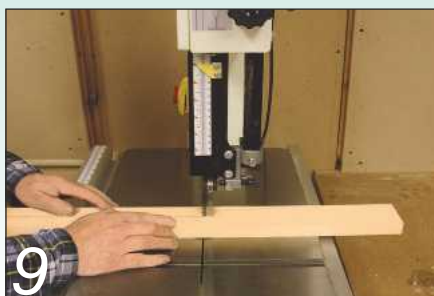
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Check that the table is square to the blade using a try square set just clear of the blade



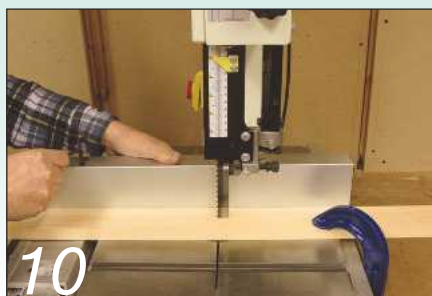
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A blade with large teeth is ideal for cutting deep material as it can clear the waste easily



9

Follow a line marked parallel to the edge freehand to determine the amount of drift



10

Cramp the test piece in place on the table and align the fence with its edge



11

If it's properly set up, the saw will now cut perfectly true and straight

checking the tension may sound a bit slap-dash, but it works.

Lift the blade guard. With the machine turned off, deflect the blade with a moderate push of the forefinger. The blade should not deflect more than 7 or 8mm. This should be just right for general work. For deeper cutting, use more tension by tightening so the blade will deflect by only 5 or 6mm. Remember to slacken the blade off after use. Most saws have a lever to apply and release the tension.

It has to be square

Next, set the table square to the blade. To do this, raise the blade guard and stand a try square on the bed of the table. Slide the

square up to the blade so it's almost touching it. There should be an even gap, from top to bottom, between the blade and the square. Adjust the table as necessary. Now set the fence square to the table, again using the try square.

Dealing with drift

Drift is a problem that's caused by the way the blade is made, not by the machine. You'll need to make an allowance for drift every time you fit a new blade.

Ninety-nine out of 100 bandsaw blades will have a tendency to drift in one direction or the other. You need to set the fence to account for this each time you change the blade. This is one of the misunderstood areas of bandsaw set-up. Some say it can

be adjusted by running the blade on one edge of the tyres or the other, effectively twisting the blade as it's presented to the wood. This may correct the drift, but it will put untold pressure on the blade and will also damage the tyres before long.

To set the fence to account for the drift of a particular blade, take some wood about 25mm thick and scribe a line along its length and parallel to one good edge. Move the fence back out of the way and make the cut, following the line, skewing the wood by hand as necessary to keep the cut on track. When you reach the half-way point, stop the saw and cramp the piece of wood in that position. Adjust the fence so that it aligns with the edge of the wood. The fence is now set to the drift of the blade.

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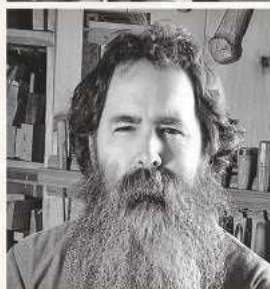
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BY IAN WILKIE



Clearing the clutter

Spring cleaning, reviewing, sorting out, downsizing, call it what you will. Most of us need to take stock from time to time of the tools and equipment in our workshops. I've just tackled mine...

My workshop was becoming very congested. I kept knocking into things, and there never seemed to be enough room to manoeuvre. It was time to harden my heart and ask myself a few basic questions. For instance, did I really need all this stuff?

My working area is about the size of an average garage. It's an extension to the house, which makes it very pleasant to work in, but I do have to avoid tramping sawdust through neighbouring rooms. Two large double-glazed windows give lots of natural light, with views down the garden.

Thinking ahead

The next question I asked myself was what sort of work I intended doing in the future. This is really what it's all about. I've never

made big, heavy pieces of furniture, preferring to tackle smaller projects which I write up for the magazine. However, I do have some standard woodworking machines which take up a lot of room and are difficult to move. It's ridiculous to be sentimental about a machine which has given good service, but it happens!

Goodbye Kity

My first decision was to change my bandsaw. Originally I had a Kity 613 in the workshop, always ready for use, but I was persuaded to move it into the garage and that immediately gave me more floor space. I recently replaced the Kity with a Jet JWBS-9 bench bandsaw, **photo 1**. I may not be able to cut thick planks any more, but then I don't need to!



1 A small Jet bench-top bandsaw saves a good deal of floor space



2 Proxxon's compact planer can tackle boards up to 80mm wide...



3 ...and is perfectly complemented by the same firm's thicknessener



4 My Myford Mystro short-bed lathe had given me many years of faithful service...



5 ...but its three-phase motor required a converter and special wiring



6 Its place was taken by a Jet JML1014, a quiet and compact ½hp model

When I analysed what I'd been cutting over the last five years, I realised that I rarely cut wood thicker than 80mm. What's more, lifting heavy timber onto the bandsaw table was undesirable. With the Jet I can cut wood up to 80mm thick and 230mm wide, and that's quite adequate for my needs. I've positioned it on a light DIY stand, and can lift it off easily if necessary. The fence isn't marvellous, but I'm going to look at Axminster's modification which should be an improvement; otherwise I'm very pleased with its performance.

Thick or thin?

The next machine I looked at was my DeWalt thicknesser. This has proved to be a useful and efficient machine, but again was no longer being fully utilized. It's described as portable, but it's very heavy and moving it out of its parking space to use it was getting more difficult. My son was quite happy to find room for it in his workshop, so that disappeared quite quickly... but I know where to find it if the need arises!

In its place I now have a separate planer (photo 2) and thicknesser (photo 3) from Proxxon. These small (and truly portable)



7 The indexing wasn't calibrated. One solution was to fit a Sorby indexing plate



8 Another possibility was to use the CSC500K chuck from Axminster



9 This chuck is very well suited to this size of lathe as it is so compact

little machines plane and thickness 80mm wide boards, so they match up well with the capacity of the Jet bandsaw.

Having a turn-out

My wife then drew my attention to my woodturning lathe, pointing out that if we ever moved from our present house it would be a

problem to dismantle and too heavy for us to lift. Over the years I've had various lathes in the workshop. Back in 1999 I bought this Myford Mystro short-bed lathe, **photo 4**, and have used this for most of my turning work ever since. It's been very reliable and a pleasure to use. However, after due consideration I came to the rather reluctant decision that this lathe was unnecessarily large and powerful for the work I was now doing.

A quick sale

The Mystro's three-phase motor required a converter and special wiring, **photo 5**. I very rarely swung the head round to use the bowl turning attachment for large bowls and platters. I'd also purchased a compound slide and tool-post accessory so that I could undertake small metal-turning tasks on it. When I bought a Warco mini metal turning lathe at a later date, I no longer had a need for this expensive accessory. Within the week I had sold the Mystro, and away it went in manageable pieces to its new home with a delighted new owner.

If you're looking to sell a machine, or indeed to buy a second-hand one, I suggest you have a look at www.lathes.co.uk where for £37 you can give a full description of your equipment for sale and upload up to six photographs. Another possibility is to forward full details and a photograph to the secretary of a local woodturning club, to be circulated among the members.

In with the new

My new lathe is the Jet JML1014, **photo 6**, bought from Axminster for £299. I've tested this ½hp model before and found it very robust and quiet. The maximum of 250mm over the bed and 350mm between centres gives plenty of scope. This is not an electronic variable speed model, but I've never had any objection to changing speeds manually.

The Jet has a 1in x 8tpi threaded spindle – a different size to the Myford – but I was able to convert my chucks with adapters so this wasn't a problem. It's a heavy machine at 30kg, but my wife is quite used to helping me lift woodworking machinery! Fortunately I'd kept the stand from a previous Jet lathe; it turns out that Axminster no longer stock this stand, which is a pity because it was designed for this particular lathe. Four bolts hold the lathe securely, and the result is a neat unit with good access underneath when it comes to cleaning up shavings.

Essential indexing

The only thing that disappointed me on the Jet was the indexing. This proved not to be calibrated and was therefore very difficult to



10

My Sorby sharpening system stands on a slim pedestal, ready for immediate use

use. I regularly make use of indexing in my work, so I needed a reliable system.

One solution was to use the Sorby indexing plate, **photo 7**, which fortunately I already had. I also have an Axminster collet chuck and I was able to index this myself with 12 positions, which gave me another option.

Another possibility would be the CSC500K chuck from

Axminster which I recently tested; this chuck has clear calibrated positions marked on the back, **photo 8**. The

chuck is very well suited to this size of lathe as it's so neat. It's necessary to have some form of locking device for the indexing, and this I made myself, **photo 9**.

Staying sharp

I quickly became a convert of the Sorby sharpening system when it was first introduced, so out went my bench grinder and its jigs. Until recently I also still had a Tormek wet grinder and a number of jigs. It became obvious that I didn't really need two systems, and although the Tormek is very good and you get a fine finish on the tool, it's heavy and a bit messy to use so we parted company. The Sorby machine now stands on a slim pedestal, **photo 10**, ready for immediate use.

Next, I removed the wooden cupboards full of turning tools from the wall and thinned out the contents. I now tend to use Sorby's interchangeable blades for most of my turning, and this is a more compact system, **photo 11**. A few of the bigger tools are still kept in a cupboard, but many others had become superfluous and I gave them to a local turning club.



15

It's easy to replace the hardboard surface to my main work area when it becomes damaged



11

I now use the Sorby interchangeable blade system for most of my turning



12

A compact oil-filled radiator heats the shop, while filing drawers store small items



13

These drawers are all clearly labelled, and are fitted out as required

Warm and tidy

The workshop is heated with an oil-filled radiator, **photo 12**, which is thermostatically controlled and operates on a time switch. This type of heater is ideal: it is inexpensive to buy, costs no more to run than any other system and wood dust is not a problem. The room is always pleasantly warm to work in, and this factor becomes more important as you grow older!

Metal filing cabinets with shallow drawers store much of my smaller equipment, and stack on top of one another to save space. From time to time I try to thin the contents out. I've standardised on Forstner bit and twist drill sizes so I don't have to keep those I have no use for.

The drawers are all clearly labelled, **photo 13**, and where appropriate are fitted out for things like collets. I can quickly find what I am looking for, and it's easy to spot



14

Small machines and larger pieces of equipment are stored on shelves in steel cabinets

when something is missing. On the whole I avoid buying sets of things, however nice they look, because you end up paying for items that you're never going to use.

Machinery store

My small machines and larger pieces of equipment are stored in two double steel cabinets, **photo 14**. The Proxxon machines which are used the most, such as the bench drill, bench sander and table saw, are on the shelves at waist height. The bench drill, for example, can be lifted out with the minimum effort and transferred onto the bench.

A bench facelift

Next, I treated the work area along one wall and under the window to a new hardboard surface and several coats of matt varnish, **photo 15**. As you can see, it looks very smart



16 Once a year I sand down the top of my free-standing bench and re-varnish it



17 My Warco mini metal-working lathe was transferred to a Wolfcraft folding bench



18 I then made a simple plywood cover for it to help keep the sawdust off



19 The Hegner fretsaw sits on its triangular stand next to the Warco lathe



20 A folding stool with a back is useful when working for long periods at this machine

at the moment but I know it won't remain like that! However, it's easy to replace the hardboard when it becomes damaged. The engineering vice is always in use.

I also have a small free-standing bench, **photo 16**, and once a year I sand down the top and re-varnish it. This bench is small enough to move around the shop as necessary.

Small machines

My Warco variable speed mini metal-working lathe was transferred to a Wolfcraft folding bench which is strong and stable, **photo 17**. Although it's compact and small, this is a heavy machine. I used to have it on the Jet lathe stand, but I had to sacrifice that for the new woodworking lathe. I then made a simple plywood cover for it to keep any sawdust off, **photo 18**.

The Hegner fretsaw sits on its triangular stand next to the Warco lathe, always ready for use, **photo 19**. It's quite easy to move away from the wall for cleaning up. I find that a folding stool with a back is very useful when working for concentrated periods at this machine, **photo 20**.

The magnifying lamp you can see cramped to the edge of the work area next to the lathe has a long arm, and can be positioned over either of the machines as required.

My Henry vacuum cleaner sits neatly under the Wolfcraft bench, and the hose is long enough to connect to any small machines that have a dust extraction point. It would be neater if the take-off on the scrollsaw was on the right rather than the left, but that's life!

Last thoughts

I'll close with a couple of labour-saving tips. My latest modest purchase is a broom and a dustpan on a long handle, which saves me stooping down to brush up the shavings.

Do you find you sometimes drop a screw or washer on the floor? I have the answer; a small magnet stuck on the end of a broom handle will soon find the missing object!

The system wins

In my younger days I had shadow boards with tools hanging in their designated places on the workshop wall, and open shelves dotted around with stacks of boxes of screws, jars, cans and the like. However, I learnt that metal tools soon went rusty and everything became covered with dust. Worse still, I could never readily find what I wanted anyway. Now I believe in system. I know that some visitors to my workshop think it's too neat and wonder if I ever make anything, but I also know that others go back home and, at the very least, have a bit of a tidy-up themselves.

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BY COLIN SIMPSON

Stirring it up

TURNING FOR THE KITCHEN

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 Trivet
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 Cheese board
 Herb chopping board and mezzaluna
 Bread bin
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 Bottle stopper
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 Toast rack
 Spice rack
 Egg holder
 Scoops
 Salt and pepper pots
 Salt pig

If you fancy a change from making bowls, candle holders and the like, take a look in the kitchen for inspiration. You may even win Brownie points from your other half!

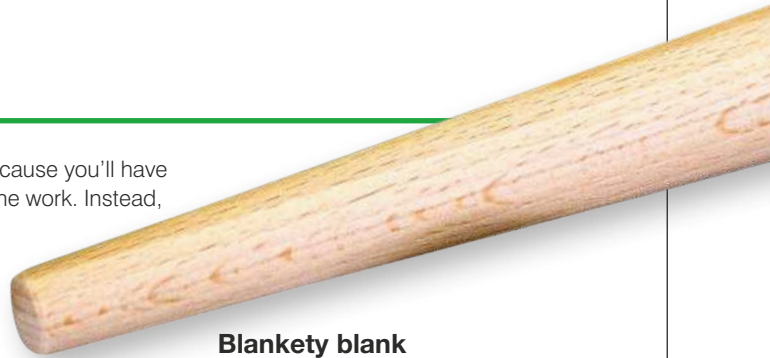
It's surprising how many items you can turn for use in the kitchen; the panel on the left lists a small selection. In this article I'm going to show you how to turn a couple of the simplest, aimed at the novice turner. Over the next few issues I'll tackle some more kitchen items, which will gradually get harder to make, and explain the different turning techniques involved.

TURNING A SPURTLE

A spurtle is a traditional Scottish stick used to stir porridge. More importantly though for novice turners, it's a great way to practise with the skew chisel. You'll need a close-grained timber – beech is ideal, and is the traditional choice for culinary items. Maple and sycamore are also good choices, as are the fruit woods. However, if you're using trimmings from your own fruit trees, don't turn anything

from the whole branch because you'll have the pith running through the work. Instead, cut a square blank to the side of the pith, **photo 1**.

You don't need to apply a finish to these pieces, but if you do, it needs to be food safe, such as Chestnut's Food Safe Finish, mineral oil or liquid paraffin.



1 Mark out your blank to avoid including the pith in the centre of the log



2 Use the spindle roughing gouge to turn the square blank to a cylinder



3 For the last 50m, change direction so you always start with the tool on the wood



4 Mark out the various handle dimensions with the lathe running



5 Use a parting tool to cut grooves to the left of the first two lines



6 Start the planing cut with the bevel of the skew resting on the wood



7 Roll the tool clockwise until the cutting edge just starts to bite



8 This is what can happen if you roll it too far. Avoid at all costs!

Blankety blank

My spurtle was made from a blank 32mm square and 300mm long. Find the centre of each end and mount it between a four-prong drive in the headstock and a revolving centre in the tailstock. I'm going to turn this at around 2000rpm but, depending on your level of experience, you may wish to turn it more slowly.

Using a spindle roughing gouge, convert the square to a cylinder. Start cutting about 50mm from the end of the wood. Keep the handle well down and place the tool on the toolrest before starting the cut. Feed the bevel gently into the wood and slowly raise the handle until the cutting edge engages. The more you raise the handle now, the heavier the cut will be. Once the tool starts cutting, slide it along the toolrest from left to right, going off the wood at the tailstock end, **photo 2**.

Continue with this cut, working towards the headstock about 25mm at a time until you're about 50mm from the headstock end of the blank. Now do the same cut but in the opposite direction, **photo 3**, going off the wood at the headstock end.

When you've converted the blank to a cylinder, keep the lathe running and draw pencil lines to mark out the extent of the handle. Draw one line about 12mm from the headstock end, a second line 50mm from the first, and a third line 32mm from the second, **photo 4**.

The first shaping cuts

Use a parting tool to cut grooves to the left of the first two lines, **photo 5**. Now do a planing cut with the skew chisel to form a taper between these two grooves. A planing cut is performed slightly above the centre of the wood. To achieve this, raise the toolrest slightly. For this cut I use the short point of the skew down. Lay the tool on the toolrest and then allow the bevel to caress the wood very lightly, **photo 6**. You should not be getting a cut at this stage.

Next, rotate the tool clockwise until the cutting edge just starts to cut, **photo 7**. Rotating more will give you a deeper cut, but if you rotate too far you will come off the bevel and the tool will dig in, creating an



ugly spiral along your work, **photo 8**.

When the tool begins to cut, start to slide it to the right along the toolrest, **photo 9**. Try to keep the shaving coming off the bottom half of the cutting edge, but not right down at the corner. Repeat this cut until you have a gradual taper between the two grooves.

Cutting a vee

Now make a V-shaped cut on the third pencil line. Hold the tool vertically on the toolrest with the long point of the skew pointing down. Keep the handle low. Gently raise the handle until the long point of the tool enters the wood. It's important to use only the tip of the tool, so don't be greedy with this cut; just take a little shaving off at a time. **Photo 10** shows me cutting the left-hand side of the V and **photo 11** shows the right-hand side. Alternate these cuts, going a little deeper and wider each time.

Forming a bead

With the V cut giving a little clearance, start to roll the bead with the skew, **photo 12**. Start as for the planing cut but then continue to roll the tool clockwise at the same time as moving it along the toolrest. Unlike the planing cut, this cut should be made right at the tip of the tool. You must also start to swing the handle – in this case from left to right again at the same time as moving it along the toolrest and rolling it.

If you don't want to cut a bead with the skew, you can use a spindle gouge, but the action is very similar. Start with the bevel rubbing, raise the handle to find a cut – at the tip of the tool – and then slide the tool along the toolrest at the same time as swinging the handle, **photos 13** and **14**.

Creating the taper

With the handle complete, the rest of the spurtle can be turned. You could use the spindle roughing gouge, but stick with the skew for the sake of practising your planing cuts. Start near the tailstock end, traversing the toolrest from left to right, and start each successive cut a little further to the left, working towards the handle, **photos 15** and **16**. Then sand the piece if necessary, finishing with 240-grit abrasive paper

Finally, reduce the diameter at both ends to just a small stub, either with a parting tool or the skew, **photo 17**. Stop the lathe and use a saw to cut through the stubs. Clean up the ends with abrasive paper and your spurtle is ready for its first stir, **photo 18**.



9 Slide the tool along the toolrest to complete the planing cut



10 Use just the long point of the skew to cut the left-hand side...



11 ...and then reverse the tool and your stance to cut the right-hand side



12 With the V cut giving some clearance, start to roll the bead with the skew



13 Alternatively you can cut the bead in the same way with a spindle gouge...



14 ...but you still need to swing the handle as the tool cuts the bead



15 Start the taper near the tailstock end, traversing the toolrest from left to right



16 Start each successive cut a little further to the left, working towards the handle



17 Use a skew or a parting tool to reduce the diameter at each end to a small stub



18 Clean up the ends with abrasive paper and your spurtle is ready to use

MAKING A HONEY DIPPER



series of parallel closely-spaced grooves in the egg shape using a narrow parting tool, **photo 3**.

Forming the handle

The dipper's handle can be any shape you want, but mine is a gradual taper; the thistle shape that I cut on the spurtle is cut in the same way. The only difference is that the honey dipper's handle is much smaller in diameter. You may experience some vibration as the wood flexes away from the cutting tool. If this happens you can support the wood with your fingers of your other hand, as shown in **photo 4**. Sand and part off, again as you did with the spurtle, and use abrasive paper by hand to clean up both ends, **photo 5**.

Now you have your first two kitchen utensils. Next month I'll tackle another two slightly more difficult projects and extend your turning skills a little more.

drive and the revolving centre, and will be removed when the turning is finished.

Shaping the egg

At the tailstock end, measure and mark a line about 30mm to the left of your waste line. Use a parting tool to remove the waste, turning the right-hand end of the wood down to a stub. Leave enough wood for the revolving centre to do its work.

Next, cut another groove with the parting tool just to the left of your 30mm line. Your workpiece should now look like **photo 1**. Turn an egg shape at the tailstock end, either with a skew or spindle gouge, **photo 2**, using the same method as for turning the bead on the spurtle. Then cut a

Many of the techniques used to make the honey dipper are the same as the spurtle, so I won't go into such detail. My honey dipper is 180mm long and 19mm in diameter. Mount a suitable piece of wood between centres and convert it to a cylinder with a spindle roughing gouge. Mark pencil lines round the circumference about 5mm in from both ends. This waste wood will be damaged by the four-prong



1 Cut a groove with the parting tool just to the left of your 30mm line



3 Then cut a series of parallel grooves in the egg shape using a narrow parting tool



2 Turn an egg shape at the tailstock end, either with a skew or a spindle gouge, in the same way as turning the spurtle bead



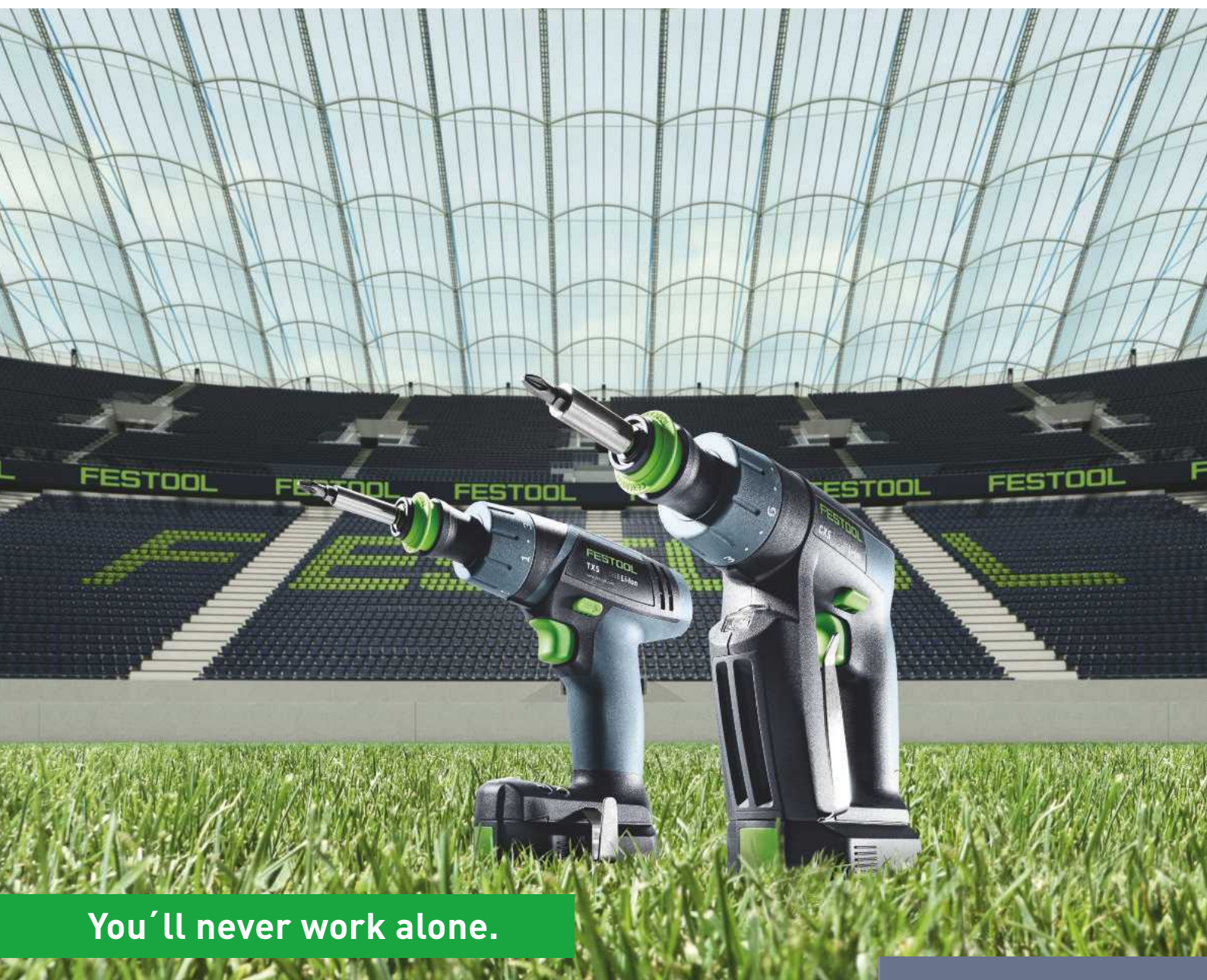
4 Damp down any vibration caused as the wood flexes away from the tool by supporting it with your fingers



5 Part off the dipper and use abrasive paper to sand both ends smooth

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BY CHRIS CHILD

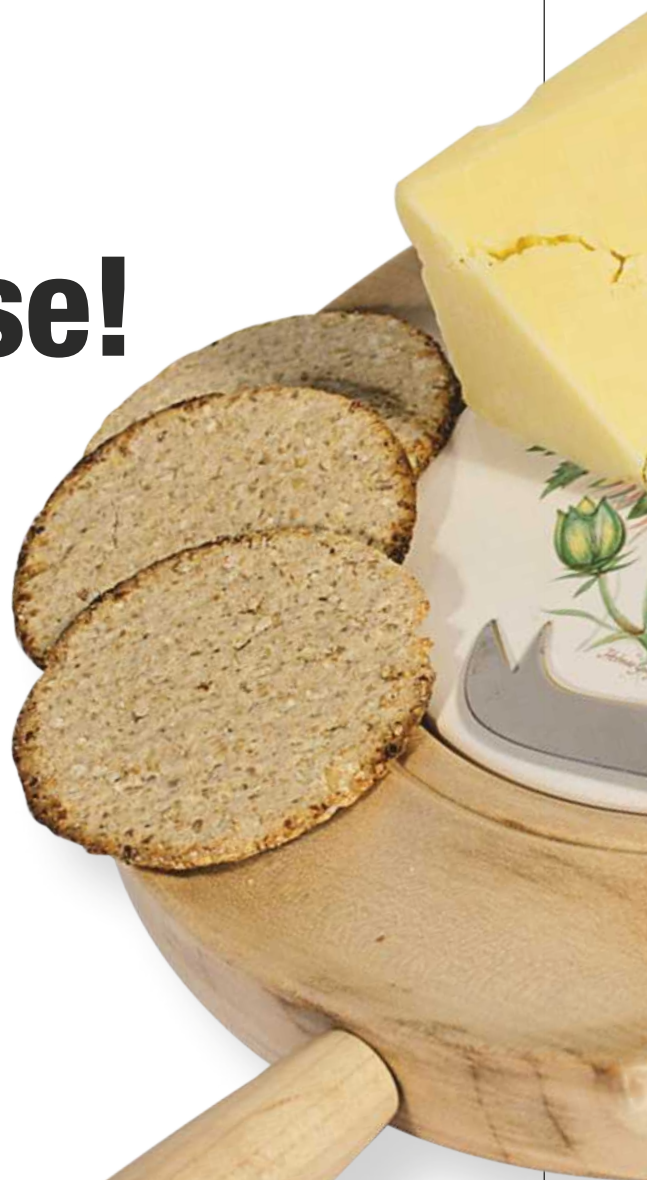
Cracking cheese!

A lot of cheeses start life in the round, so a round cheeseboard seemed a perfectly natural choice for this project. All I needed to find was a suitable circular tile to drop into the centre of the board, and a tanged cheese knife blade to fit the matching turned handle

The even textured grain of sycamore cuts very sweetly, making it an ideal starter wood for beginners to the craft of woodturning. I made this cheese board from a disc measuring 270mm diameter and 25mm thick, hollowed out in the centre to take a 150mm diameter decorative ceramic tile. The handles for the platter and the cheese knife are made from pieces of sycamore 140mm long and 30mm square. Dimensions of the finished pieces are given in **fig 1** on page 73.

Preparing the disc

Screw a faceplate to the back of the disc and mount it on the lathe, **photo 1**. Don't forget to wear your face shield when working with a large-diameter project like this, as shavings can come off the rim at alarmingly high speeds.



1

Screw a faceplate securely to the back of the disc



2

Flatten off the face with a round-nosed scraper



3

Test the flatness of the disc with a straightedge



4

Cut a recess in the disc centre for your expanding chuck



5 Use an angled scraper to form the dovetail in the recess

Set the speed of the lathe to about 600rpm and flatten off the face with a round-nosed scraper, **photo 2**. Hold the tool flat on the toolrest and take light cuts, sliding the knuckle of your forefinger against the toolrest to regulate the depth of cut. Test the bottom of the platter with a straightedge to make sure it's flat, **photo 3**.

Cutting the chuck recess

Measure the distance across the jaws of your expansion chuck and cut a recess in the centre of the disc with a small square scraper, **photo 4**. I have a special scraper

which I've ground to the same angle as the jaws of my chuck to form the dovetail for the recess, **photo 5**.

Test your chuck in the recess to make sure that it fits into the dovetail correctly, **photo 6**, and that it runs true.

Forming the tile recess

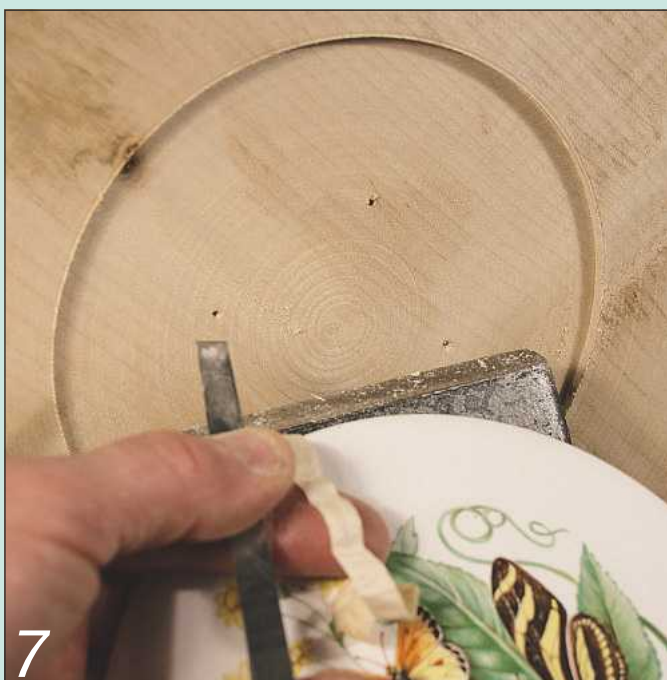
With the disc held securely on the chuck, flatten off the front using the same technique as before, cut out the 150mm diameter recess for the tile, **photo 7**, and test its fit. It should sink into the recess, leaving the top surface slightly proud so

that it forms a cushioned edge with the wooden platter, **photo 8**. Then cut the recess a millimetre wider all round to allow for the wooden disc to shrink.

To take the eye away from the inevitable narrow gap around the perimeter of the tile, form a rounded decorative bead all round the edge of the recess using a small skew chisel, **photo 9**. Position the toolrest as close to the work as it will go and hold the chisel flat like a scraper, but at a slight cutting angle. Take tiny cuts, first with the point and then with the blade, gently nibbling out the required shape.



6 Test the fit of the expanding chuck in the recess



7 Flatten the front and form a shallow recess for the tile



8 Check that the tile fits in the recess and sits slightly proud of the disc

Trimming the rim

True up the rim of the platter with a bowl gouge. To avoid breaking the corners of the disc, slice in from the rear first, **photo 10**, then work in the opposite direction from the front, **photo 11**.

Use the same gouge to form the shallow hollow in the face of the platter. As before, work the tool first in one direction, **photo 12**, and then in the other, **photo 13**.

Bore the 8mm diameter hole for the dowel joint of the platter handle with a bit held in an electric drill, **photo 14**. The hole needs to be drilled at right angles to the platter's face, at a downward angle of about 20°, so you may need to ask someone to guide you while you do this. Alternatively, clamp a sliding bevel set to the 20° angle to the edge of the disc to act as a guide.

Sanding and sealing

Sand the work all over, starting with 80 grit aluminum oxide abrasive, followed by 150,

then 240, and finishing off with 400 grit.

To seal the wood, you could use Food Safe Finish from Chestnut Products. This is a colourless oil which dries to a soft satin finish. It is waterproof and quite durable, and is ideal for salad bowls as well. Apply it with a brush or cloth and rub lightly down when dry. After polishing and removing the board from the chuck, use a spot or two of silicone sealant to hold the tile in place.

Drilling the knife handle

Measure the diameter of the cheese knife tang with a pair of callipers and drill a slightly undersized hole in the end of the handle blank before you start doing any turning, **photo 15**. By drilling first, you ensure that the hole runs through the central axis of the handle.

Use the lathe as a drill press by securing a twist drill into the headstock. With the workpiece braced against the tailstock centre, feed your workpiece into the drill by

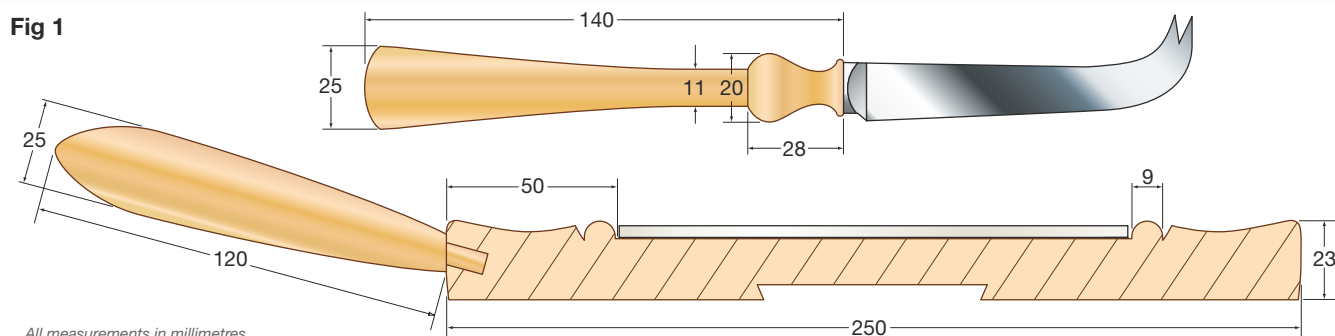


winding in the tailstock wheel. Switch off the lathe before withdrawing the work from the drill. Remount the handle on the lathe using the pronged centre in the headstock, and fit a revolving tail centre in the hole to support the other end of the work.

Turning the knife handle

Cut the square section down to a cylinder with a roughing-down gouge and then slice the end surface around the hole clean using the point of a skew chisel, **photo 16**. Slice a

Fig 1



All measurements in millimetres



9 Form a rounded bead at the edge of the recess



10 True up the rim by slicing in from the rear first



11 Then work in from the opposite direction



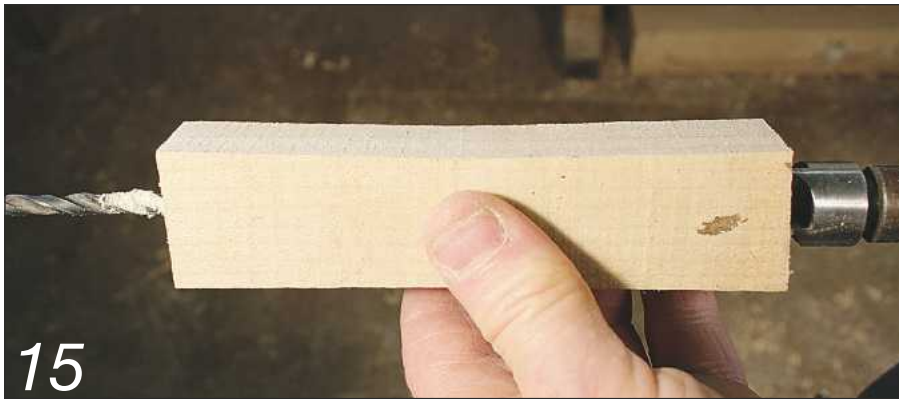
12 Use the same gouge to form a shallow hollow across the front of the moulding



13 Complete the hollow by working from the opposite direction



14 Drill an 8mm diameter hole in the edge of the platter to take the handle dowel



15

Drill the hole for the knife blade tang on the lathe before starting turning

V-cut a little way in from the end of the handle using the same tool. Use the corner of a parting tool to round off the shoulder of the V cut, **photo 17**. Then, with a pointed spindle gouge, form the small pear shape at the neck of the handle, **photo 18**. Slice in

at the other end of the cylinder to form the butt of the handle, **photo 19**.

All that remains is to form the taper of the handle with the roughing-down gouge to complete the handle shape, **photo 20**. After sanding and polishing it, slice off the

finished handle using the skew chisel, **photo 21**. Glue the tang of the knife blade into the hole with epoxy resin adhesive.

The cheeseboard handle

Place the block that will form the handle of the cheeseboard between centres and turn it down to a cylinder. Then create an 8mm diameter dowel at one end using the parting tool, **photo 22**, and shape the rest of the handle using a small bowl gouge, **photo 23**.

Sand and polish the handle as before, then part it off carefully with the point of the skew chisel, **photo 24**. Glue it into the hole in the rim of the platter, and you're done!

FURTHER INFORMATION

Chestnut Food Safe Finish

- Chestnut products
- 01473 425878
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16

Slice the top end of the handle clean with a skew chisel



17

Shape the convex half of the handle's decorative neck first



18

Then form the small pear shape at the neck of the handle



19

Turn the butt end of the handle to a cone shape using a skew chisel



20

Form the gradual handle taper with a roughing-down gouge



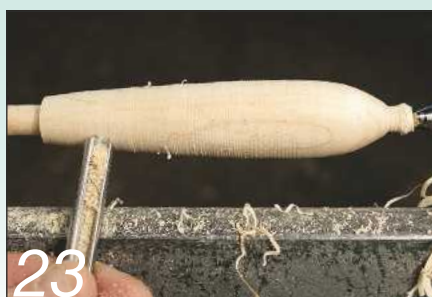
21

After sanding and polishing the handle, slice it with a skew chisel



22

Use a parting tool to form the dowel on one end of the cheeseboard handle



23

Shape the cheeseboard handle using a small bowl gouge



24

Part off the handle carefully with the point of the skew chisel and sand it smooth

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Bandsaws are popular and useful workshop machines, and even the smallest models can be surprisingly effective. This modest Axminster machine from their Hobby range is ideal for the home workshop

Axminster HBS250N Hobby Series bandsaw

Smaller bandsaws can often be rather a disappointment, with flimsy accessories and poor fittings. These combine to make them inefficient and unrewarding to use. This Axminster model happily doesn't suffer from these problems. It's a sturdy machine with a solid work table and proper blade guides. It's supplied with a pair of fences and a useful base storage cabinet.

Design features

This is a conventional machine with few surprises. It has a solid steel frame with steel doors. The base cabinet is also steel and has adjustable feet. It needs a screwdriver or a coin to open the door, which seems like a good security feature. The upper and lower doors open independently and both are fitted with safety micro-switches, so the machine will run only if the doors are both shut. There is a standard NVR switch on the spine.

The bandwheels are cast alloy with rubber tyres to support the blade. On top of the machine is the blade tensioning knob, and the blade tracking control is mounted on the rear of the top casing. The lower wheel is belt-driven by the induction motor, and there is a choice of two speeds. A dust extraction port is also fitted.

Good guides

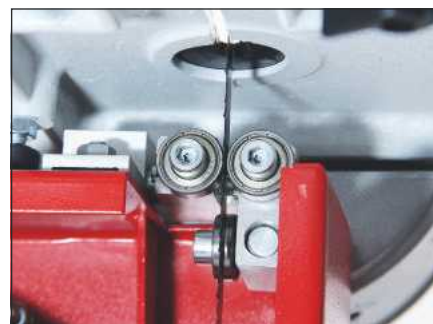
Accurate cutting depends on having good guides. The bandsaw blade is a flimsy, flexible thing that will twist and move without proper guides and support. The HBS250N is fitted with three roller bearing guides above and below the table. These are solidly mounted and easy to adjust with a hex key. They give good support and are a great improvement on the plain guides often found on cheaper machines.



The strong, balanced alloy blade wheels help to reduce vibration in use



Upper and lower ball-bearing blade guides give excellent blade control



The guides are solidly mounted and are easy to adjust with a hex key



The saw happily ripped its way through a plank of thick hardwood

Table and fences

The work table is cast iron with a good smooth surface. Alloy rails are fitted to both the front and rear edges, and these are used to support the rip fence and hold it parallel to the blade. The table can be tilted to 45° for bevel cutting.

Both rip and mitre fences are supplied. The rip fence has a magnifying lens over the marked scale, making it easy to set. It clamps in position securely and is well supported at both ends. The mitre fence runs in a groove on the right-hand side of the blade. It's a bit on the small side, but does provide some useful guidance.

Using the saw

Initially I had a problem with this saw as it seemed to be completely powerless, stalling whenever a workpiece was presented to the blade. It turned out that the drive belt was a little loose, and this was causing the difficulty. Once tightened, the saw performed as you would expect.

It's a smooth-running machine and cuts well. The rip fence locks securely in place and is easy to adjust. It copes equally well with softwoods, hardwoods and manufactured boards. It cuts at a fairly leisurely pace, and at times feels a little underpowered. However, overall it's a competent machine which is ideal for the home workshop. It's particularly easy to set up and needs little adjustment to keep it accurate. It performs well and also has the benefit of a large base storage cabinet, ideal for spare blades, jigs and all manner of other workshop paraphernalia. **AS**

SPECIFICATION

POWER	370W
TABLE SIZE	340 x 340mm
TABLE TILT	-5° to 45°
BLADE LENGTH	1790mm
BLADE WIDTHS	6 to 13mm
CUTTING SPEEDS	660 or 960m/min
MAX WIDTH OF CUT	245mm
MAX DEPTH OF CUT	120mm
EXTRACT OUTLET	63mm
WEIGHT	43.5kg
ACCESSORIES	mitre fence, storage cabinet stand, blade

VERDICT

This is a competent machine that's easy to set up and use.

PROS ■ Well made
■ Good blade guides
■ Useful storage cabinet

CONS ■ Small mitre fence
■ A little underpowered

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■
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FURTHER INFORMATION

■ Axminster
■ 03332 406406
■ www.axminster.co.uk

The blade happily manoeuvred its way along some relatively tight curves



The rip fence is easy to set and has a magnifying lens over the scale



The mitre fence is rather small but provides some useful support



The solid cast iron work table can be tilted from -5° up to 45°

Many people tend to think that power sanders are intended just for smoothing wood, but with a suitable grade of abrasive fitted, a range of different metals, plastics and painted surfaces can be tackled too

Mafell EVA 150E orbital sander

£402



Mafell have recently introduced two versions of a new sander to their range, the EVA 150/3 and the EVA 150/5. Both have the same 350W power rating. The EVA 150/5 has an orbit of 5mm and is ideal for general sanding, while the EVA 150/3 has an orbit of 3mm and is intended for extra fine finishing. It was the former which has recently been on my test bench. It

embraces a number of unusual features, and has very low vibration; its makers claim a vibration level half that of most other sanders on the market, making it much more pleasant to use without fatigue. This low vibration level is achieved even though the sander runs 20 per cent faster than other models.

Unusual abrasive

Instead of the usual abrasive disc, this sander employs an abrasive mesh called Abranet. Not only does this last much longer than the more traditional grit type; the weave of the mesh allows the dust

generated during use to pass through it for collection in the dust bag. The coarser grits do have perforations as well, because they produce a lot of dust and the perforations allow easy and efficient removal of this. If preferred, a dust collection vacuum hose can be fitted as an alternative to using the small dust bag provided.

Standard features

The abrasive discs are held to the pad by the Velcro hook-and-loop system. Whatever abrasive disc is fitted, the speed can be readily governed by the control button fitted on the top of the body, marked from 1 to 6. The on/off switch is under the main handle, and there is provision for setting this to continuous running.

A second handle at the front provides for adequate control of the sander. The sander works best when gentle pressure is applied while keeping it constantly on the move. Heat-sensitive materials should be sanded at fairly low speeds, to prevent overheating and possible clogging of the disc.

SPECIFICATION

POWER	350W
PAD DIAMETER	150mm
NO-LOAD SPEEDS	9000-20,000/min 12,000-24,000/min
SANDING STROKE	3 or 5mm
EXTRACTION OUTLET	25mm
WEIGHT	2.15kg
ACCESSORIES	kit box, Allen key, interface pad

VERDICT

Mafell are renowned for their development and innovation, and it's difficult to find fault with this product.

PROS ■ Good two-handed grip
■ Easy-fit abrasive mesh dishes
■ Generous 4m flex

CONS ■ Quite expensive

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■■
PERFORMANCE ■■■■■■

FURTHER INFORMATION

- NMA Agencies
- 01484 400488
- www.nmatools.co.uk



The sander can be used with a dust bag or a vacuum extraction hose



The speed control button is well placed on the top of the main handle



The Abranet abrasive discs are attached to the pad using the hook-and-loop system



Fine abrasives are best used for final sanding of existing finishes

This little glue gun has a strong plastic body with a metal nozzle. The wire safety stand has two positions and clicks back against the body when it's not required

Extra support

This sander shouldn't be used on edges. These don't support the sander, and this leads to a rounding of the surface. For curved surfaces, both convex and concave, a soft interface pad with hook-and-loop fastening is available.

A protective buffer is fitted just above the pad, so that when working close to a vertical surface, unintentional contact and therefore possible abrading of this surface can be avoided.

Using the sander

This machine certainly impressed me. The mesh discs do have a longer life than the grit type, and dust removal was good. And the discs can be changed in the blink of an eye. It makes my two older disc sanders seem just that: old and outdated.

It's not the cheapest sander on the market, but quality and efficiency always cost more than run-of-the-mill products which might look superficially similar, but lack refinements and quality of build.

The sander is supplied in a heavy-duty kit box strong enough to support a tank, and another bonus is the generous length of the mains lead at almost 4m. **GW**



The coarser grades are ideal for heavier-duty sanding jobs



The sander is packed in a sturdy kit box with its various accessories

Bosch PKP18E glue gun

The power rating of this glue gun is 200W when first switched on and this reduces to 16W to maintain the temperature of the glue. The heated glue is very hot when it leaves the nozzle but it cools off rapidly and cures quickly. The molten glue will burn if it comes into contact with the skin and the nozzle remains hot for some time after being switched off, so take care.

The main criticism levelled at glue guns is that they tend to drip glue and are therefore quite messy. However, the PKP18E seems to have overcome this problem.

Design features

The gun is ergonomically designed with a large trigger; it is well balanced and comfortable to use; the long nozzle enables the glue to be positioned in tight corners. The mains cord is reasonably flexible and when the glue gun is standing on the bench with the stand extended it is quite stable.

Glue sticks

There are glue sticks for almost any task, and the 'open time' differs from 20 to 60 seconds. Sticks can be purchased in bulk which works out much cheaper, and they have a very long shelf life. For example, 1kg of 300mm 60-second glue sticks costs just £10.96 from Axminster. The glue is virtually odourless which makes it pleasant to use.

Using the gun

Hot-melt-glue is not a suitable adhesive for gluing up furniture joints because it's quite thick, difficult to spread and dries too fast. However, it's useful for temporarily holding wood, making jigs and general repair work.



Glue sticks come in a range of types and sizes; always buy them in bulk to save money!



£19.99

It's particularly useful aid to the woodturner when it comes to glue chucking. A few small blobs will hold the blank securely on the chuck, and because it is dried so fast you can get straight on with the turning.

If there's any fault with this tool, it's the absence of a built-in LED light to show that the gun is still plugged in... but it's a small criticism. **IW**

SPECIFICATION

POWER	200W
OPERATING TEMPERATURE	200°C
HEAT-UP TIME	up to 7 minutes
STICK SIZE	11 x 45-200mm
GLUING CAPACITY	20g/min
WEIGHT	350g
ACCESSORIES	glue stick, long nozzle, manual

VERDICT

This is an excellent little glue gun, sold at a very reasonable price; it's highly recommended.

PROS

- Anti-drip nozzle
- Wire safety stand
- Viewing window

CONS

- No on/off indicator light

VALUE FOR MONEY



PERFORMANCE



FURTHER INFORMATION

- Bosch
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- www.boschpowertools.co.uk

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THE SAW MAKER'S WIFE @SKELTON SAWS

Skelton Saws is a small company that's just started making saws by hand in Yorkshire. Here's a look at one of its first products

£245

Skelton dovetail saw

There's something about using top-class kit for the first time; you can actually feel yourself mentally preparing to do justice to your new acquisition. Despite being only a temporary custodian of this new dovetail saw, I felt strangely apprehensive... partly because I had such a fine tool in my possession and wanted to do it justice, but mostly because I'd challenged myself to make some test dovetails with it!

Perfect balance

The saw clearly looks the part, but it's only when you hold it in your hand that you know it really is a top-quality item. Nothing feels wrong, from the handle itself, through to the overall balance of the saw and onto the smooth metals of the blade. Some might bridle at the sharp corners of the Indian rosewood grip or the (unlikely) risk of breakage across the short grain there, but I guess there'll always be someone looking to find fault. The handle is available in medium and large sizes; others are available to order.

Quality metal

The blade is made from the highest quality Swedish spring steel hardened to 50-52 RC (Rockwell hardness), and tapers slightly from heel to toe. With a thickness of 18 thousandths of an inch and a set of just 2 thou, the resulting kerf is very fine indeed.

Such a thin blade – though steely strong – needs a solid back, and the hand-worked brass bar holds it perfectly straight. It also adds just the right amount of weight to the saw, enabling the user to concentrate more on steering and less on power.

Although most dovetail saws are traditionally set on a rip cut, you can have the

saw set with a cross cut if you prefer. The blade has 15 teeth per inch (16ppi) and, while some other saws offer more tpi, I can't see that they would have much advantage over such a precision tool as this one.

First test

The ease with which the blade entered my test piece of hardwood took me somewhat by surprise, and I'd made the first cut almost before I'd realised it. So it was with the rest of the dovetails, a few strokes and I was there. The correct rip saw set for this job makes a huge difference.

Fortunately things turned out fine, but the real star of this job was the saw. My big fear now is that the rest of my kit is going to have to work twice as hard to maintain this new standard of workmanship! **MC**



The saw comes with a blade guard, and is well wrapped and protected on delivery



The handle is very comfortable to grip; custom-made sizes are also available



The saw is perfectly balanced and appears to cut without any effort



Its narrow kerf makes light work of cutting precision dovetails

SPECIFICATION

BLADE LENGTH	10in
BLADE TAPER	1 1/16in (heel) to 1 7/16in (toe)
TEETH PER INCH	15 (16ppi)
RIP CUT SET	8° rake angle
CROSS-CUT SET	12° rake angle, 15° fleam
HANDLE	open pistol-grip rosewood

VERDICT

This is a terrific saw! Start saving now...

PROS ■ Precision engineering
■ Perfect balance
■ Very narrow kerf

CONS ■ Quite expensive!

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■
PERFORMANCE ■■■■■

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Skelton saws
- 01723 448202
- www.skeltonsaws.co.uk

Cramps come in a huge variety of shapes and sizes nowadays, and every woodworker has his or her favourites. These three cramps from Wolfcraft will facilitate a wide range of different workshop tasks

Wolfcraft EHZ PRO one-hand clamp



The green handle is static and the black lever is used to move the head

SPECIFICATION

MAX LENGTH CAPACITY	700mm
EXPANSION CAPACITY	210 to 960mm
THROAT	100mm
CRAMPING PRESSURE	up to 120kg

VERDICT

This is a truly one-handed clamp that's easy to handle and set up.

PROS

- Coated steel bar
- Tough plastic components
- Removable soft grooved pads

CONS

- Pads can stain oak

VALUE FOR MONEY

PERFORMANCE

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Wolfcraft
- 0121 705 7987
- www.wolfcraft.com

£21.58

Pad problems

The jaws have soft pads measuring 90 x 40mm and are V-grooved to hold round stock. They can be removed for cleaning, and it's worth doing this regularly to remove any build-up of adhesive.

I noted that the pads left a slight brown stain on the surface of English oak; this may be a chemical reaction between the tannin in the oak and the material from which the pads are made. I discussed this with a cabinetmaker who uses oak regularly, and he confirmed that he had experienced the same problem. I've drawn therefore brought it to the attention of Wolfcraft, who may be unaware of the reaction. Until it's rectified, I would recommend using card or thin scrap wood between the pads and the oak as a precaution.

Useful variations

Pressing the yellow button on the side of the tail allows it to be removed, reversed and placed at the other end of the bar so the clamp can work in an expansion mode.

Each bar has two yellow blocks which can be moved along the bar to act as feet, which is a useful facility to aid setting up the cramping action. They can be slid out of the way when not required and sit snugly under the pads. The item to be cramped sits on the top of the yellow blocks and by squeezing the black handle the head will be moved in 10mm stages until contact is made with the item to be cramped.

Lastly, one bar can cross over another – for example, when cramping up an edging strip on a carcass.

Summing up

This is one of a useful range of one-handed cramps. I was surprised that the pads stained the oak and have removed half a mark; otherwise they're a very good buy. **IW**

These one-handed cramps from Wolfcraft come in a variety of lengths from 150 to 915mm. The version on test has a length capacity of 700mm with a 100mm throat. The bar is made from steel with a rust-resistant coating, and the other parts are made from tough, durable plastic with internal metal locking mechanisms.

Easy action

The head has a soft-grip green handle, a black lever and a yellow trigger. The green handle is static and the black lever is used to move the whole head towards the tail until it locks on to the material to be held.

When the yellow trigger is squeezed back towards the handle, the head is released and can be moved along the bar.



The jaws are fitted with soft pads that are grooved to hold round stock



Pressing the yellow button allows the tail to be removed and reversed



Each bar has two blocks that can be used as feet when cramping boxes

Wolfcraft ES 22mm corner cramp



£6.58
for 2

These small spring-activated corner cramps are designed to hold material between 10 and 22mm thick, and are sold in packs of two. I would recommend buying two packs to give greater versatility as they aren't expensive.

There is an invitation on the pack to test this product before purchasing, which is a novel approach. You open the cramp by squeezing the spring to open the jaws and releasing it when they're in place, so you need considerable hand strength. The suggestion that you have a go first before buying and opening up the package is a good one... but not an option when buying on-line!

Using the cramps

These cramps are ideally suited for making up and holding shelf units, picture frames and box or drawer carcasses while the glue cures.

VERDICT

These are simple, well-designed corner cramps.

PROS ■ One-handed operation
■ No keys or spanners required
■ Good grip on thicker workpieces

CONS ■ Needs strong hands

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■
PERFORMANCE ■■■■■

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel opposite

They are constructed from hard, tough and well-finished plastic. The outer black jaws have a rubberised sleeve to protect the wood and reduce slipping. The inner blue triangular jaw has a dovetail slide on the back which enables it to adjust to the thickness of the wood being held; the thicker the wood, the firmer the hold.

A better grip

To grip wood under 10mm thick, I made soft spacers and inserted them between the black jaw and the blue triangle. The spacers were cut from an old mouse mat and held in place with double-sided tape.

The jaws are designed to rest horizontally on the bench so if you wish to glue up a picture frame, for example, the task is made easier. These are simple, well thought out and designed corner cramps which don't need any keys or spanners and will be a useful addition to most woodworkers tool kit. *IW*



The cramps are ideal for use in pairs (or fours) when making right-angled joints



You can grip materials less than 10mm thick by adding soft spacers to the jaws

Wolfcraft ratchet cramp

£9.08



To disengage the jaws from the work, simply depress the yellow lever

These unusual ratchet clamps are 285mm long. They open to 70mm at the nose and have a 95mm deep throat. They're made in strong GRP-reinforced plastic with a metal ratchet system; the ends of the jaws are covered with small soft pads.

To operate the cramp you squeeze the soft-grip handles until the jaws lock on to the work. This is an easy and comfortable action to execute. Pressing the yellow lever disengages the jaws; however, the sudden release of the ratchet mechanism can be slightly unnerving at first.

It's well worth having two of these cramps. They're most useful when accessing small areas – for example when gluing inserts into a box. There are plenty of other uses where access for ordinary cramps is confined. *IW*

VERDICT

This is an unusual ratchet cramp with a wide range of potential uses.

PROS ■ Jaw capacity 0-70mm
■ Non-slip handles give secure grip
■ Long nose allows access in confined spaces

CONS ■ Sudden ratchet release

VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■
PERFORMANCE ■■■■■

FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel opposite

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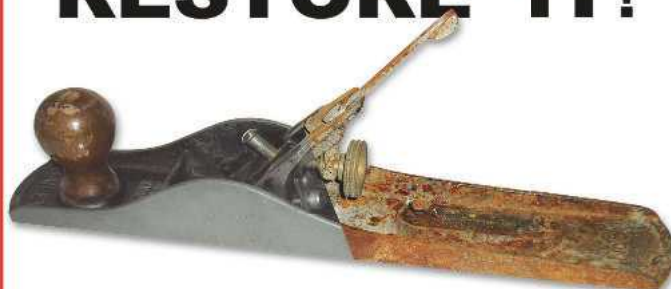
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WANTED

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Spiers / Norris / Henley planes wanted by private collector; any quote beaten. Ring Ron Lowe on
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In your own write...

Here are just a few of the latest letters we've received since the last issue. Drop us a line on paper or via screen and keyboard to add your voice to the woodworking crowd; you might be one of the lucky few who will manage to get their hands on a coveted *Woodworker* badge!

SNAIL MAIL OR EMAIL?

You can write to us at *The Woodworker*, MyTime Media Ltd, Enterprise House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6HF or send an email to mark.cass@mytimemedia.com



TEA ROOM CHAIRS

Hi Mark

After being inspired by Douglas Brewer's project in the July 2014 issue of *The Woodworker*, I looked for other variations of the classic Glasgow tea room high-backed chair. Unlike Douglas, I haven't kept to the original design for this chair, as I wanted a more modern look to fit with our furnishings. So I combined the features I liked from all the designs of this style of chair that I could find.

I used white oak for the chair and brown oak for the decoration. I decided to emboss the decoration on the back of the chair, rather than having it pierced, as I felt this gave a more up-to-date look. Special thanks goes to Peter at Peterborough Upholstery for the seat. I am now thinking of building a carver version.

Kindest regards

Rob Winter

Well Rob, I have to say that you've done a fine job. It's a really impressive piece of furniture, and unmistakably inspired by that great Scottish designer Mackintosh. I think all woodworkers should make at least one chair in their careers; it's a real test of skill, patience and planning. Thanks for sharing it with us.

Mark

A GOOD BENCH

Dear Mark

I've been carving for a few months now, and am currently working on a bowl with a fruit and leaf design. It's good for getting your skills up, and involves a fair amount of what my teacher calls production carving – very good discipline!

I've been hunting around for a proper bench, but most of what's on the market is too low for carving (and much too big). I reckon I'll have to get acquainted with the mortise-and-tenon joint and make my own. I've been looking for designs on the internet, but have found only one or two. Do you know of anything that could be useful? It doesn't have to look beautiful, but just be functional.

It seems that most carvers end up making their own benches, as it's the only way you can get exactly what you want. One of my friends from class has quite a good one that she inherited from her father, who made it for his own carving. They were a fishing family, so she has it ballasted with lead weights from an old boat. It's been going strong for about 40 years, so I might try to copy it, but she just has a vice on top whereas I also favour dog holes and a bit more scope for a holdfast or two.

Judith Nicholson St Ives

Glad to hear of your carving progress, Judith. I agree that a good bench is hard to find. Keep your eye out for large architectural frames in junkyards that could be adapted, or maybe convert a solid old table. If you do make your own, use the stoutest timbers you can get your hands on. Cross-brace it with a diagonal or two before bolting it to a wall or weighting it down with sandbags or some other ballast. Good luck, and please let me know how you get on!

Mark

HOME-MADE GLUE POT

Hi Mark

I've just come across a photocopy of an article about making a pearl glue warmer, but it's not complete. It seems like a gadget that I would be able to use if I could get all the details. Someone has written the word 'Woodworker' on it, and the date on the page says April 2001 page 73. I am wondering if you still have this copy in your archive, and whether it would be possible to let me have a copy of the full article.

Colin Stiller

Hi Colin

Thanks for your enquiry, and I'm sure you'll be pleased to see that I've found a digital version of the article concerned.

It looks like an interesting job to be sure, but I'm afraid to admit that I would be onto eBay myself to find one of the old cast-iron types. I have a couple of pots myself (one big, one small), and really enjoy the days when I have one on and it's simmering away and disconcerting any visitors. I also like the useful speed of Scotch glue, not to mention the veneering side of things. Good luck with it whichever route you take, and happy woodworking!

Mark

Design on the breakfast table

I found myself drawn to this particular archive article as it features a spot of curved laminating work, my very task on the day in question

I've always liked the thought of people having a handicrafts teacher. I would imagine they're few and far between these days, but many of us woodworkers will no doubt have met one or two over the years.

It's always an interesting business reading old copies of our favourite magazine, and this issue of *The Woodworker* from January 1967 proved to be no exception. Along with a good selection of articles (including one by the peerless Charles Hayward), there were some interesting projects and show reports. It gradually became clear that, like the world of the late 1960s and society in general, the times – and also the designs – they were a' changing.

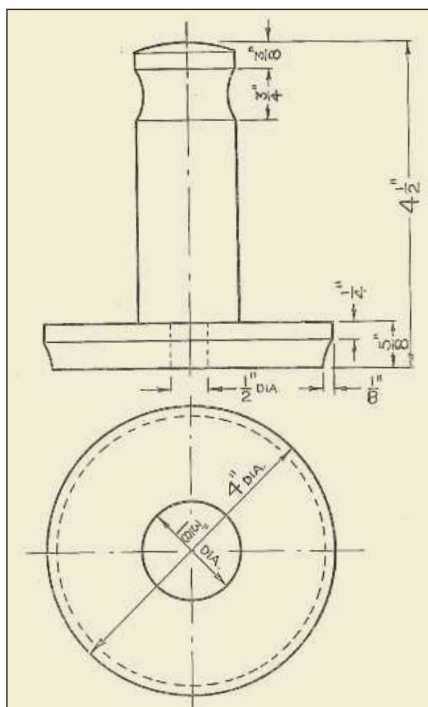
Current aesthetic

I think that this egg holder set presents a very good example of a change in thinking and an effort being made to present an idea or a sensibility as a physical form, a tangible expression of the current aesthetic. The 1960s merged effortlessly with the succeeding decade, and the prevailing designs improved as they became more confident in their own being.

Former function

If I had any spare time on my hands I would definitely have a go at this one, and I'd advise anyone who has yet to experience the joys of lamination to make themselves a simple former and to give it a go.

It's not too tricky to make your own veneers if you have a sharp blade on your bandsaw and are careful using it. Otherwise there's always readily available aero ply (1.5mm birch) or even actual wood veneer itself (generally 0.7mm thick). It's a fun activity and you're only really limited by the ingenuity of your forming jigs and blocks.



Turning too

What really sells this job to me though, is the way it brings turning into the mix. Not only is there a useful and decorative stand to make, but each holder can have the egg hole turned into it by utilising a custom block on which to mount it. It's a pretty classy project all round, and a far cry from the egg cup I turned in my own school woodwork class (although I did get lucky there and managed to make one which somehow gripped the egg so that it wouldn't fall out even when inverted). Happy days!

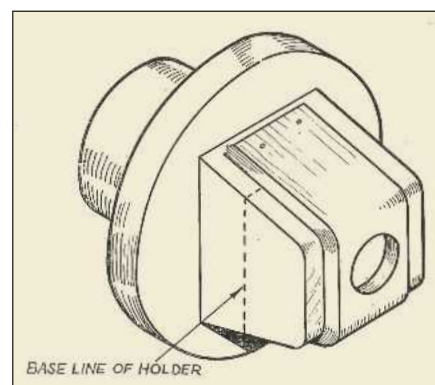
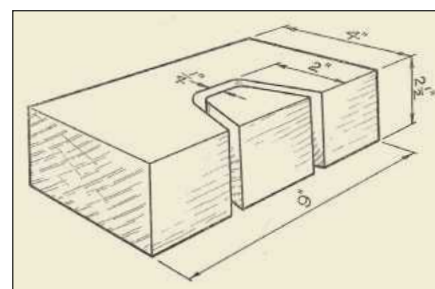
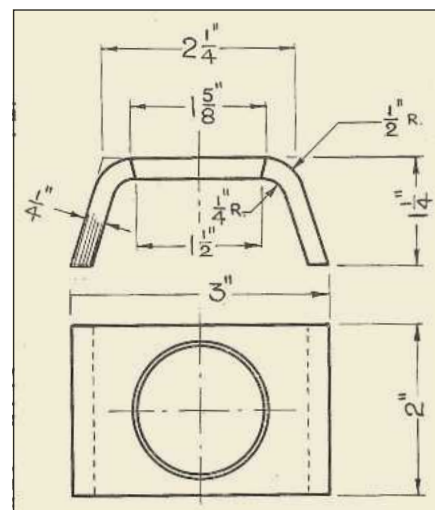
Mark

Laminated egg holder and stand

Handicraft teachers' page



Fig. 1. A pleasant modern design.



More from *The Woodworker* archive next month...

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